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The Christ and the creed ...

THE CHRIST AND THE CREED

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THE CHRIST AND THE CREED

THE JARRELL LECTURES

FOR 1927

BY
WARREN AKIN CANDLER
D.D., LL.D.

Delivered Before Emory University



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THE ANDERSON JOSEPH JARRELL LECTURES

“THE Anderson Joseph Jarrell Lectureship” has been established at Emory University by the Rev. Charles C. Jarrell, D.D., and some of his friends, to honor the memory and promote the faith of his revered father, the late Rev. Anderson Joseph Jarrell, A.M.

The discourses contained in this volume compose the first series of lectures on this foundation.

Than the theme chosen, “The Christ and the Creed,” the lecturer, who enjoyed for many years intimate friendship and affectionate relations with the saintly man and minister whose name the lectureship bears, considered no subject could be more suitable; for Joseph Anderson Jarrell loved fervently the Christ and believed unwaveringly the faith recorded in the Creed.

In the New Testament the word “faith” sometimes means the body of objective truth contained in the Gospel, and sometimes it signifies the personal trust of believers in Christ and their experience of his saving grace. The Rev. Anderson Joseph Jarrell held unfeignedly the Christian faith in both these forms. He believed the truth as it is in Jesus, and he was ever ready to “contend for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints”; and the life which he lived in the flesh he lived by the faith of the Son of God.

On this firm foundation of unfaltering trust in the Lord Jesus Christ his spotless character was raised and his lofty ministry was fulfilled, in a life of surpassing fidelity. No man in his generation was more immovable and steadfast in doctrine and holiness, or more abundant in fruitful ministries, than was he.

The lecturer counts it a peculiar honor and a high privilege to give the first series of lectures on the foundation established in honor of this holy man and faithful minister who so beautifully adorned "the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."

With the hope that the lectures may contribute in some degree to strengthen in others the faith by which he lived and labored, and to advance the kingdom of the Christ whom he adored, they are published in accordance with the terms of the lectureship.

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The Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose again from the dead, he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sin; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

I

THE OBLIGATION OF BELIEF

There seems no possible reason to be given why we may not be in a state of moral probation, with regard to the exercise of our understanding upon the subject of religion, as we are with regard to our behavior in common affairs. The former is as much a thing within our power and choice as the latter.—*Butler's "Analogy."*

Not to see truth, not to own it and love it, not to bend reverently before it, is ever an awful thing. But there is something darker than that. To see a truth, and suspect its certainty, and then recoil—see it, and in our heart hold back—that is a woe unutterable for any soul of man. A world full of such souls would be a hell.—*William J. Irons, D.D.*

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.—*Hebrews 3: 12.*

I

THE OBLIGATION OF BELIEF

“He saith to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.” (John 20: 27.)

It is a profound observation of Grotius that “incredulity has in it something voluntary.” There is also what Prof. William James has called “the will to believe.”

In both belief and unbelief there is a volitional element except where the mind is confronted by a coercive demonstration, which compels assent to the conclusion reached and excludes all liberty, or right, of opinion. If all belief were of this involuntary kind, freedom of thought would be impossible. But in the widest ranges of human life and concerning its highest interests demonstrative proofs, which constrain acceptance of that which is propounded, are both unattainable and undesirable. In these realms the intellect operates with a degree of freedom which reveals character, tests sincerity, and imposes the most solemn moral responsibility. It is imperative that the mind of man should explore these fields notwithstanding the hazards which beset the effort and the weighty obligations thereby imposed.

It is the office of the human reason to seek and acquire truth, and toward this supreme objective it should move fearlessly and at all cost. For one to abdicate this prerogative of thought is to choose ignorance in preference to intelligence and love darkness rather than light. Where is there one who would willingly inflict upon himself such a maiming of his mind?

“Who would lose,
Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
Those thoughts that wander through eternity?”

In the exercise of this high function of the intellect for the pursuit of the truth in matters of fact, it is indispensable that confidence be given to credible evidence. Otherwise the trustworthiness of reason must be renounced; the dependability of testimony, even the testimony of the senses, must be repudiated; and the effort to attain truth abandoned as hopeless. If the existence, or trustworthiness, of credible evidence is repudiated, reason is worse than useless. In that case, the only reasonable system of philosophy is Pyrrhonism, and the yearning for truth ends in the despair of universal doubt. Such skepticism overthrows the possibility of moral certitude; reckons all knowledge to be impossible; envelops mankind in darkness that cannot be dispelled, and in which the spectral creations of the benighted imagination stalk abroad to terrify the hopeless souls that fill the earth.

Amid such gloom science and philosophy,

quite as really as religion, would stumble and perish; for they all alike walk not by principles of coercive demonstrations, but by the light of postulates and evidence that are incapable of such proofs. Even the late Thomas H. Huxley, who chose to be agnostic with reference to religion and most gnostic concerning matters of science, said: "The ground of every one of our actions, and the validity of our reasonings, rest upon the great act of faith, which leads us to take the experience of the past as a safe guide in our dealings with the present and the future. From the nature of ratiocination it is obvious that the axioms on which it is based cannot be proved by ratiocination."

These axioms are the bases of all sound ratiocination, and they are not more indispensable in the search for truth than is the credible testimony which they presuppose and with which they are inseparably related.

On these firm foundations rest the conclusions of religious belief as well as the decisions which control the conduct of mankind with respect to all matters, whether individual, domestic, social, commercial, industrial, political, or of whatsoever sort. They depend upon self-evident principles, of which there is neither the need nor the possibility of proof, and upon testimony that is credible because worthy of trust. Their ultimate support is the foundation of faith in the truthfulness of trustworthy witnesses.

In the strict sense of the word "faith," it is the only foundation of belief, in most all that seriously concerns human life. Trust in testimony is required to qualify jurors in courts of law to reach just verdicts, and one who refuses credible testimony given in his hearing is regarded as unfit for such service. Issues involving life, liberty, and property are determined by men sworn to reach conclusions in accordance with the law and the evidence, unbiased by prejudices or prepossessions. The oaths thus required of jurymen imply the voluntary element in belief, the reliance upon testimony which is obligatory upon them, and their perfidy, if they render judgments contrary to facts credibly attested.

In like manner, by testimony alone does a man know his ancestry and assert his right to an inheritance. Not by any speculations concerning heredity and environment does he determine his lineage, but by dependable statements of fact made by trustworthy witnesses. In the determination of this and all other matters of fact there can be no other ultimate foundation of reasonable belief except human testimony.

Distrust of rational conclusions resting on such a foundation betrays a culpable skepticism which is as discreditable to character as it is repugnant to reason. It well deserves the condemnation which Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton expressed when he said: "Of all the signs of a corrupt heart and

a feeble mind the tendency to incredulity is the worst."

Skepticism concerning Christianity is just as blameworthy as is the distrust of all other things which challenge confidence on the same bases of belief—the foundation of faith.

Faith is correctly defined by Bishop John Pearson as "the assent unto that which is credible, as credible." It is, therefore, belief resting on competent testimony and is concerned in the main with facts.

Christianity being preëminently a religion arising from, and dependent upon, facts, offers proofs of the facts which are its historic foundations, and these evidences are altogether credible. No other facts of history are better attested.

The religion of Christ does not approach mankind with any form of special pleading for its acceptance. It does not ask that reason be renounced in order that its facts may be accepted and its truths believed. On the contrary, it makes its appeal to reason, and demands only that reason be exercised reasonably.

This view accords with the teaching of the Christian apologists of all ages. So Tertullian said: "Reason is a divine reality; and God, who purposed, disposed, and ordered nothing without reason, wills that all things should be treated and considered with reason." To the same effect speaks Bishop Butler in his justly famous work "The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Re-

vealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature," saying: "I express myself with caution, lest I should be mistaken to villify reason; which is indeed the only faculty we have wherewith to judge concerning anything, even revelation itself."¹

But reason is abused, if not abdicated, when it is employed unreasonably by attempts to determine matters of fact by appealing to *a priori* hypotheses instead of resorting to the credible testimony of competent witnesses.

It cannot be affirmed too frequently, nor remembered too constantly, that Christianity is a revelation of God to man exhibited in facts of history, among which the central and supreme fact is the Christ. The facts of his incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and exaltation are the bases of the historic Creed of Christendom, the ultimate source of Christian doctrine, and the fountain of religious truth.

If these great facts are indeed facts, supported by credible testimony, they cannot be evaded nor explained away by any rationalizing processes whatsoever. They must be faced as facts and accepted as such, or disproved by evidence more credible and convincing than the historic testimony on which they have been received by the Church during the centuries of its persistent life and unshaken faith.

¹Butler's "Complete Works," page 188.

Determined doubt in the face of credible testimony disorders the mind, darkens the reason, and debases the soul. Retained and cherished, it drives the doubter into ever-deepening darkness and disquieting unbelief. Such is the significance of the words of the Risen Lord to the doubting Apostle, "Be not faithless, but believing," an exhortation which were better rendered: "Become not unbelieving, but become believing." If in sight of the unquestionable tokens of the crucifixion, visible in the body of his Risen Lord, and against the trustworthy testimony of his fellow Apostles, Thomas had continued his doubting, his faithlessness would have been culpable and would have become progressive in the direction of deeper doubt. The inescapable obligation of belief was imposed upon him by the indubitable facts which confronted him; and by it he was doomed to darker doubt or deeper faith according to the manner in which he met it.

It is the property of both belief and unbelief to grow. Into the gloomy world of unreality Thomas would have plunged if he had refused to believe when he was confronted by the facts before him. He chose the way of believing and came to the joyous confession of his faith in the confident exclamation, "My Lord and my God"—a brief creed greater than that uttered by Peter at Cæsarea Philippi some weeks before the death and resurrection of their Master (Matt. 16: 16, Mark 8: 29, and Luke 9: 20). From that

time forth Thomas knew neither doubt nor disquietude. Resting in the childlike faith that reposes on fact, he no longer indulged the childish faithlessness which is tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine that the carnal mind may conceive or cunning men may contrive (Eph. 4: 14). He promoted his peace by thus stabilizing his faith.

Such stabilization of faith on a foundation of credible testimony to the most momentous of facts in history is of the utmost importance, and never more needed at any time than in the present era, which has been characterized as "an age of doubt," and its coat of arms said to be "an interrogation point rampant, above three bishops dormant, and its motto Query?"²

Forsaking solid fact supported by credible testimony, and following the changeful speculations of variegated rationalism, such an age finds no peace to its soul nor strength to its life. Ever claiming to learn and "never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 3: 3), it has come to take pride in its ignorance of divine truth and to boast of its agnosticism. The chief exponent of one of its manifold systems of its kaleidoscopic speculations—the protagonist of a philosophy already discarded—delivered himself of the senseless utterance that, "Did the Almighty, holding in his right hand Truth and in his

²"The Age of Doubt," by Henry van Dyke, D.D., page 9.

left hand Search After Truth, deign to proffer me the one, I should request, Search After Truth."³ Thus he declared his low evaluation of Truth, and made the quest for it a cruise of a pleasure boat, going on a sail for mere sport, instead of the voyage of a merchantman seeking goodly pearls until the search culminated in the acquisition of one above all price.

Such is the shallowness and restlessness of a generation which ignores the obligation of reasonable belief and sacrifices its peace and its power in the pursuit of theories that neither give satisfaction to the mind nor strength to the soul.

In it are found more forms of unbelief than in the Churches are seen divergent tenets and "varieties of religious experience." Creeds of rationalism and unbelief are far more numerous and divergent than all the creeds of all the Churches. The dappled dogmas of materialism, pantheism, theism, immanentism, transcendentalism, pragmatism, and creative evolutionism are but a part of the parti-colored and changeful forms of speculative systems by which men have endeavored to explain and explain away the fact of Christ. None of these speculative creeds have satisfied their authors, or satisfied for long any of their followers.

Some who have been misled by one or more of them are vainly endeavoring to retain some sort

³Lessing.

of hold on Christianity without a whole-hearted belief in the supernatural Christ, proclaimed and glorified in "The Creed of Christendom"; but they go with stumbling feet and hesitating steps, and with the mincing movement of what Joseph Cook called not inaptly "the foppishness of liberalism." Their "adventures" in unbelief remind one of Emerson's description of the people of Massachusetts, of whom he said: "The whole population was out in search of a religion." Like the raven which Noah sent out, they fly with weary wings, never finding rest for the soles of their feet and seldom having discernment enough to return to the ark of the faith from which they went forth.

In truth, on the pinions of wayward and willful incredulity not a few have flown into a region of the most amazing credulity; for as Chateaubriand has truly observed: "Men are ready to believe everything when they believe nothing. They have diviners when they cease to have prophets, witchcraft when they cease to have religious observances. They open the caves of sorcery when they shut the temples of the Lord."

The infidelity which prevailed in France during the days of the Revolution exemplified the tendency of voluntary unbelief to end in enslaving overbelief. Sneering skepticism fell into the most egregious credulity and boastful intelligence embraced the most ridiculous superstitions. The professors of magnetism and magic made con-

verts among the disciples of Diderot, and the salon of a philosophical deist was turned into a Heraclea in which necromancers claimed to conjure up the shadows of the dead. Religious faith was ridiculed and the Christian Scriptures were reviled, while the vagaries of Mesmer were believed and the impostures of Cagliostro were accepted. In that heliacal rising of brilliant doubt, which was heralded as the dawn of a day in which the new sun of reason would disperse all clouds and scatter night away forever, there stalked forth in the presence of the Illuminati of the "era of enlightenment" the illusive phantoms that had flitted before the dazed vision of Paracelsus and the deluded gaze of Agrippa.

In the present "age of doubt" may be observed the reappearance of the same monstrous beliefs of unbelief. One of the most celebrated, if not the most renowned, among the physicists of the present time accepts the delusions of spiritism and imagines he has daily communications with a son who was slain in the world war; and to the incredible speculations of the Society of Psychical Research eminent philosophers and outstanding scientists give active support. Thus we see superstition and skepticism bound in the fellowship of voluntary incredulity walking abroad in the experience of self-imposed superstition together. This result is inevitable.

The Nemesis of incredulity is enormous credulity. When faith is abjured, reason is abandoned;

and when both have perished, they are laid down in the same sepulcher, locked in each other's arms.

To forefend against the coming of an era of ghosts and goblins in the present age, a return to the "Creed of Christendom" is required—a return to a reasonable religion resting on a basis of fact supported by credible testimony.

The center of this creed is the fact of Christ, and the citadel of this religion is established in his Person. Upon him converge all the articles of the Christian faith, and from him is derived the strength of every argument framed for its defense. He authenticates its sacred Scriptures. To him lead up the miracles of the Old Testament, and the marvels of the New Testament are accredited by his incarnation. The coherence and significance of prophecy are found in him; for "to him give all the prophets witness" (Acts 10: 43). To him is due the existence of the Church; and its creed springs from his appearance in the flesh and rests upon the testimony of witnesses to that which "was from the beginning, which they heard with their ears, saw with their eyes, looked upon, and which their hands handled of the Word of life" (1 John 1: 1). He is "the central evidence of Christianity," and by the facts of his being it is sustained.

Christian belief, therefore, is not a misty exhalation from an indefinite sentiment, nor a shadowy hallucination of ignorant superstition, nor the deceitful device of a cunningly devised

fable. It is not a discovery of the human intellect, but the deposit of truth "once for all delivered to the saints."

"It is the strength of Christianity that its feet are on this earth of ours while its soaring head is in the skies." It stands firmly on the immovable rock of the fact of Christ. And this fact of Christ cannot be ignored or evaded, or explained away. It involves belief or unbelief, acceptance or rejection, obedience or disobedience, which control thought, determine character, and fix human destiny.

By its responsibility for faith, or accountability for faithlessness, is imposed upon every soul who confronts it; and from its factuality in Christ arises the obligation to believe. Herein is found a characteristic of the Christian religion which sets it quite apart from any and all other religions which have challenged the attention of mankind.

If the ethical teachings of Jesus were the whole of Christianity, his system of morality would be of a superior quality, but not of a very different type from that of other religions—Confucianism, for example. But the Teacher back of the teachings makes all the difference. Men more easily accept his principles than they admit the divine claims of his Person. Not so much what he said as what he claimed to be was the point of his sharpest conflict with men in the days of his flesh; and the issue has not changed through all

the centuries that have followed. It is the same in the twentieth century that it was in the first.

The rationalists of the present generation by their denunciation of all creeds delude themselves into imagining that their opposition is to dogma rather than to Christ. But at bottom their hostility is to him. Upon the articles of the Christian faith which declare his supernatural character and divine authority they concentrate their warfare. Obsessed with naturalism, they seek to substitute speculative theories about him for the facts revealed in him and established by him. Belittling the creed which enshrines him, they betray the Saviour whom it glorifies. Like the ancient pagans, who garlanded their sacrificial animals before slaying them, they clothe the Christ of history with floral declamations before they crucify the Son of God afresh, after they have obtained a verdict of condemnation of him before the tribunal of speculative philosophy erected by themselves to pass judgment upon him. With the Roman Procurator, Pontius Pilate, they seek to wash their hands of his blood while they condemn him to death.

But by none of these devices is it possible for them to rid themselves of his Person, and reach conclusions about him that satisfy themselves even; for by unfeigned belief in him alone is found stability of conviction and repose of soul.

No erratic course of speculative reasonings can by any means meet the imperative obligation of

belief, bring intellectual confidence, or qualify one for the faithful discharge of Christian duty. Faith in the Christ of the Christian Creed alone supplies spiritual force adequate for the pursuit of Christian life.

No one will have the hardihood to affirm that the Creed represents inaccurately, or equivocally, the fact of Christ as set forth in the evangelic records. The articles of this confession of faith are clear and correct statements of the facts of the nature, life, and claims of Christ as the Scriptures declare them. Its formulations of fact cannot be justly opposed on account of their lack of agreement with the belief held by the Christians of the first century nor their want of accord with the documents which the primitive Church accounted authoritative records of his divine life in the flesh. And let it be clearly stated and well understood that we must accept the historic Christ of the New Testament or have no Christ at all. Outside those Scriptures, there are some scanty references to him in the writings of a few men like Publius, Cornelius, Tacitus, and Flavius Josephus; but while they prove that Jesus Christ once was in the world, yet they do not show *who* he was nor *what* he was. We are shut up to the Christian Scriptures for all our knowledge of him. If we cannot believe what they tell us, we cannot have any creed or any Christian truth.

But as long as those documents are accepted as

trustworthy, and are interpreted in their obvious meaning, the Christian creed must be held as the essential and enduring truth concerning him "whom the glorious company of the apostles, the holy fellowship of the prophets, and the noble army of the martyrs praise; whom the holy Church throughout the world doth acknowledge."

II

THE NATURE AND NEED OF A CREED

Religion cannot survive without a creed. In its absence the religious sentiment itself vanishes and dies. It would be as reasonable to expect a shadow without a substance as a religious influence without a religious faith. The necessity lies deep in the very constitution of our nature. To reject dogma is to reject religion.—*Edward Garbett, in "The Dogmatic Faith," one of the Bampton Lectures.*

Confessions, in due subordination to the Bible, are of great value and use. They are summaries of the doctrines of the Bible, and aids to its sound understanding, bonds of union among their professors, public standards against false doctrine and practice . . . Every well-regulated society, secular or religious, needs an organization and constitution, and cannot prosper without discipline. Catechisms, liturgies, hymn books also as far as they embody doctrine.—*Philip Schaff, D.D., LL.D., in "The Creeds of Christendom."*

A man's creed embodies his moral principles. To publish his creed is to make known his principles.—*William S. Plumer, D.D.*

II

THE NATURE AND NEED OF A CREED

“We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.” (2 Cor. 4: 13.)

THERE is to creeds a widespread antipathy which seems to spring from a questioning of all claims to certitude in any realm, and especially in the domain of religion. It does not proceed from the persuasion of inaccuracy in the formulation of truth, but from the disbelief of the existence and certainty of any formal and abiding expression of truth itself. Doubt is not directed against this creed or that, but objection is made to any and all credal statements alike.

The rejection of all dogmas whatsoever has become the solitary dogma of what is called “free thought”; and creedlessness has become its confident creed. It believes that nothing ought to be believed with the confidence of settled faith. This incertitude is praised as the becoming posture of a cultured mind and applauded as the attitude of one who has attained a lofty superiority to all prejudice.

Confidence in a religious creed especially is held to be most reprehensible; and, while in philosophy and science a degree of dogmatic assurance may be permissible, no such indulgence

in theology may be allowed at all. However excusable men may be for entertaining definite and certain beliefs about anything else, they cannot be allowed to hold more than provisional and transitory views concerning matters of religious faith.

This agnostic attitude is the pose imparted to the mind by the ancient Pyrrhonism of Pyrrho of Elis, revised and revamped in the modern system of Kant, according to which anything may be *thought*, but nothing may be *known*, from which dogma are derived the tenets of Immanentism and the Relativity of Human Knowledge; and which skeptical tenets in turn have given rise to Hegel's illusive doctrines of knowledge, followed by the mutable theories of Pragmatism and Bergsonism in philosophy and all the shifting forms of modernism in theology. The theory of knowledge which underlies them all robs reason of its birthright, immures it in impassable walls of imprisoning ignorance, and then, in the name of the incarcerated and dis-crowned Reason, absurdly proclaims the right of lawless freedom of thought.

Out of this prostitution of Reason to the uses of metaphysical presuppositions is born the prejudice against creeds, and the unreasoning bias against theological creeds in particular.

Clearing the mind of all the metaphysical mists that obscure or distort its vision, let us

ask, What is a Creed? what is its nature? why is it necessary? and what worthy end does it serve?

The word "creed" is a derivative of the Latin verb "credo," which signifies "I believe." A creed is nothing more nor less, therefore, than what one believes, or a summary of the beliefs of an organized body.

A Christian creed is a formulation of truths made from the facts and principles set forth in the Christian Scriptures. It does not "precede faith, but presupposes it." Its authority is not coördinate with the Bible, but subordinate to it. It is an intelligible summary of the Scriptural teachings, and it is not open to reasonable objection unless it denies or departs from those teachings.

It is by some erroneously assumed that the three Ecumenical creeds commonly called the "Apostles' Creed," the "Nicene Creed," and the "Athanasian Creed" are the embodiment of speculative beliefs which arose in the Church apart from the Christian Scriptures. Such is not their origin and history. They emanated from the primitive faith and inner life of the Church, and were bulwarks erected to defend that faith against attacks from without, and to shield from corruption the life which sprang from it and depended on it. They were not designed to change the doctrines of the Church, or to modify its standards of truth, but to protect those doctrines and maintain those standards against the in-

sidious efforts to conform them to the current philosophies of the Roman Empire, an amalgamation with which systems would have lowered them to the level of human speculations and worked their death by adulteration with the fleeting forms which were born and perished on that plane of earthly-mindedness.

It is often alleged also that the creeds have engendered hurtful controversies, inspired useless logomachies, and impaired the spirit of Christian unity. Such is very far from what has been the case. In the beginning they were bonds of union among Christian believers, and in their later forms they were ensigns around which the forces of faith gathered to resist the assaults of its foes.

Perhaps the first Christian creed was Peter's great confession at Cæsarea Philippi, when, in response to the question of the Master, "Whom say ye that I am?" he exclaimed, by the revelation of the Father and not as a conclusion reached by the uninspired processes of flesh and blood: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt. 16: 16.) It was a great but plain declaration of fact, which later was expanded into the baptismal formula of faith in which every person baptized made his confession of belief in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

The doctrine of the Trinity also was but an assertion of fact known by the experience of the primitive Church; for not one of that company of faith was intellectually capable of conceiving

philosophically the dogma of a Triune God. By the words and works of their Lord and Master they were convinced of his deity. They heard him pray to the Father and appeal to Him for the accrediting of his Messiahship. They listened to his promise to send them the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, who should abide with them forever. They could no more believe that his prayers and appeals to the Father and his promise of the Holy Ghost were the utterances of spectacular hypocrisy than they could doubt the fact of his deity. Being Jews, the sternest monotheists, they were bound to harmonize these undeniable facts with the unity of God. Hence the doctrine of the Trinity arose from their experience, without contradiction of their ancient faith, and in worshipful adoration of the Triune God. In that faith, born of fact, they were baptized, by it they lived, and in its full assurance of hope they died. Gradually by the continuity of life and the fuller apprehension of the revealed truth which nourished and sustained the life of the Church, it assumed the form of the "Apostles' Creed," which in the process of formation was expressed with some verbal variations under the influence of the peculiar circumstances and wants of different congregations and Churches. But notwithstanding these diversities of expression there was absolute and uniform agreement in the essential articles of the primitive faith, and eventually a common formula of Christian belief

emerged in this great "symbol of faith," as it came to be called.

It is not the production of the Apostles, although in it are found exact clauses that were current in the days of Ignatius (A.D. 110); and some competent scholars hold that it is as old as the latter part of the first century; and the name by which it is called points to its apostolic quality and authority.

There is no necessity to go into these disputed matters of dates and historical criticism; it is enough to say that the Apostles' Creed is "an admirable popular summary of apostolic teaching, and in full harmony with the spirit and even the letter of the New Testament."¹ Assaults upon it are, in their last analysis, attacks upon the Christian Scriptures. It is the nucleus of Christian doctrine, and in it are the germinal truths of the Nicene Creed which was framed to defend it, and which alone of all the creeds shares with it anything like universal acceptance in Christendom.

Its foremost feature is the place it gives to Christ, and the most conspicuous part of the Creed of Nicæa is that which expands and expounds the item in the Apostles' Creed concerning Christ in opposition to the denial or qualification of his divinity by Arius and his followers. It did not change, but did rather reassert and

¹"Creeds of Christendom," by Philip Schaff, Vol. I, page 14.

brace, the christological statements of fact declared in the Apostles' Creed.

This deliverance of the Council of Nicæa has not escaped derision in our day. Thomas Carlyle notably made light of its insistence on the fact that Christ was "*of one substance*" with the Father, as opposed to the Arian notion that he was only of "*like substance*"—the difference between "*homoousios*" and "*homoiousios*." This difference, he said, divided the Church over a mere diphthong. But in later years "the Sage of Craigenputtoch" confessed his error, and said: "If the Arians had won, Christianity would have dwindled away to a legend." In this conclusion concurs even Harnack, who says: "If the Arian doctrine had gained the victory, it would in all probability have completely ruined Christianity."

Such certainly would have been the effect of the triumph of Arianism. It would have destroyed by denaturing the apostolic faith concerning Christ; for it would have reduced him from a divine Creator to a human creature—two words, by the way, which differ only in the matter of a change of two small letters.

If the article of the Creed of Christendom concerning the Christ of the Church is overthrown, all the rest are pulled down with it; and this is the ultimate end of the *Arianism Redivivus* which has grown so rampant at the present time.

Such a crisis calls for the unequivocal reaf-

firmation and unflinching defense of the Creed; for the issue touches, not alone the truth of a formula framed by man, but the divine nature of our "Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who, for us men, and our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; suffered and was buried, and the third day rose again; ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of the Father, and shall come again in glory to judge the quick and the dead; and whose kingdom shall have no end."

In the defense of these great Facts of his Person and his Place in the universe his followers have the right and the duty of declaring their unfaltering faith in him and maintaining the ancient Creed in which this unwavering belief is fortified.

Why not? Why should men frame and defend dogmas in all other realms and the followers of Christ be condemned and derided for making and maintaining a creed which concerns the vital elements of their holy religion and affects influentially Christian life and conduct? Why should it be thought proper to be confident, definite, and exact about everything except that

which concerns the revelation of God and the salvation of mankind?

Statesmen proclaim political dogmas; parties frame platforms to express their principles; philosophers gather into schools by the tenets which they hold; scientists dogmatize and declare their beliefs, often with a great show of finality, notwithstanding their changefulness; and the men of medicine have their systems and by the actions of their councils excommunicate quackery and even more creditable theories of therapeutics.

If all these may without censure hold and defend doctrines about earthly things, why should the Christian Church be denied the right to have its creed and be always ready to give reasons for the hope that is in it?

The nature and necessity of the Christian creed are suggested by the fact of its history and the high ends which it has served. In proportion to the importance and preciousness of the deposit of revealed truth intrusted to the Church is the sacredness of its duty to embody it in doctrinal forms that aid to its understanding and guard it against the contaminating intrusion of "erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's word" and subversive of the peace and unity of the body of the faithful.

It is an indispensable bond of union between all those who by belief of the apostolic teachings have "obtained like precious faith through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus

Christ." This is emphatically true of the "Apostles' Creed," which has been justly called "the Creed of Creeds," and concerning which an outstanding scholar and saintly theologian has said: "It is intelligible and edifying to a child, and fresh and rich to the profoundest Christian scholar, who, as he advances in age, delights to go back to primitive foundations and first principles. It has the fragrance of antiquity and the inestimable weight of universal consent. It is a bond of union between all ages and sections of Christendom."²

A definite creed is as necessary to the work of the Church and the fulfillment of its mission to mankind as it is indispensable to its unity. Its great Commission to go "into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" defines the truth it is to preach as it goes. The command of the Lord who issues the Commission is in these authoritative words: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (more literally, "through all the days to the end of the age"). (Matt. 28: 19 and 20.)

No one who is less than God could utter such

²"The Creeds of Christendom," by Philip Schaff, D.D., LL.D., Vol. I, page 15.

words without insane or blasphemous presumption; and nobody could fulfill the task which they impose without the possession of a definite and saving revelation abiding as changeless truth throughout all the changeful centuries of time. The Church cannot run on its mission of its world-wide and age-long evangelization unless its feet be "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." The word "gospel" signifies a message of established fact—it is "good news." If the Church should stand before the unchristian world distrusting the truth of her message and speaking with a stammering tongue, she would meet with the well-merited and scornful inquiry: "Wherefore wilt thou run, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready?" (2 Sam. 18: 22.)

The Church being a fellowship of faith, a creed is required for the support of its life as well as for the fulfillment of its mission to mankind.

If it were a laboratory, or a lyceum, to which seekers after unknown truth resorted for research in order to obtain the knowledge they desired, or "to hazard guesses," no creed would be needed for its existence; but in that case it would cease to be the "pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3: 15), and sink "to the level of a mere debating society, or a body of men, who, to use St. Paul's expression, are ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."³

³"Creed or No Creeds?" by Charles Harris, D.D.

It is inevitable that the Church in "contending for the faith once for all delivered to the saints" should often find it necessary by argument to "convince gainsayers and unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, whose mouths must be stopped" (Titus 1: 10 and 12); and this imperative obligation will involve her in controversy with them who are attacking her faith from without. The world has constantly forced such conflicts upon her, in the fires of which her formal creeds have been forged during periods of such blazing conflicts. Her great leaders and renowned apologists have not pusillanimously fled such battles. Their victories of faith have secured her peace, preserved her purity, promoted her power, and extended her domain.

But she cannot endure "perverse disputings" within "the household of faith." From men who, after having obtained admittance into the sacred company, disturb its tranquillity, and destroy its harmony with "doting about questions and strifes of words in galling contentions," she rightly withdraws herself and justly excludes them from her fellowship. In so doing she commits no offense against freedom of thought and speech, nor does she invade any person's rights. In such cases she does no more than that which all secular bodies and organizations do with far less reason and justification.

In the political world, if a man ceases to agree with his party, all honorable men agree that it is

his duty to leave it and to join another party with which he does agree; or if there be no party with which he can sincerely agree, to form a new one of his own. This unquestionably is the true course to be taken by one who respects himself or regards the value of the truth for which he stands.

The same standards of doctrine and principles of conduct prevail in the realm of science. "A candidate for a scientific examination who imagines that he can deny in his papers with impunity the most fundamental principles of the science in which he proposes to qualify, will find himself woefully deceived by the result. He will be as surely rejected by his examiners as an ordination candidate of unusually eccentric views will be rejected by the bishop's examining chaplains."⁴

The right of an individual to think what he will and speak as he pleases cannot be allowed to overthrow the right of a number of people who hold the same faith to combine to propagate the beliefs which they hold in common and to achieve the practical ends to which their beliefs lead. If the liberty of one man may overrun the liberty of many men, the freedom of thought and speech for all men ceases to have any value whatsoever and becomes the exclusive and barren privilege of aimless lucubration and futile loquaciousness.

If the Church is compelled to admit to its

⁴"Creeds or No Creeds?" by Charles Harris, D.D., page 245.

fellowship men who reject its beliefs, and to intrust its offices to men who repudiate its creed, its existence as a household, or family, is at once at an end, and it passes into an exhibition of ecclesiastical gladiators enacting a diverting spectacle for the entertainment of a rabble of confused onlookers.

And it should be remembered that as a household of faith the Church is the whole "family in heaven and earth" (Eph. 3: 15).

"One family we dwell in Him,
One Church, above, beneath,
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream, of death."

If the things which were "most surely believed" (Luke 1: 1) by the Christians of the first century are doubted and denied by the Church of the twentieth, what becomes of the "common salvation" by which all men must be saved? and what is left of the communion of saints in which all redeemed souls in heaven and earth participate? Nay, verily. Will men of "the modern mind," when they enter the Church of the first-born above, instruct the Prophets and expound unto the Apostles "the way of God more perfectly"?

Can they enlighten the glorified souls of the general assembly of the saints on high? Will they undertake, as redactors, to show to St. Matthew and St. Luke the glaring errors which those inspired writers included in "the Narratives of the Nativity"? Will they attempt to justify

their doubt of all things miraculous and to defend their rejection of the Virgin Birth of Jesus because it "involves a biological miracle"? Will they inform St. Luke that, as did Marcion in the second century, so they found it necessary in the twentieth century to delete from the third Gospel the record of much which was "most surely believed by the members of the primitive Church because they claimed it was delivered unto them by those who "were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word"? Will they correct the errors of St. Paul and the aberrations of St. John concerning the bodily resurrection of our Lord? Will they applaud St. Thomas for his resolute doubts of the resurrection at the first and chide him for his too-easy surrender later to unbelievable evidence imagined to be "infallible proofs"? Will they, in short, repudiate historic Christianity to make room for modernistic hypotheses and liberalistic speculations?

The faith of the primitive Church is such a light as no modernistic clouds can long obscure or ever extinguish. If it could be utterly quenched by a total and lasting eclipse through shadows cast upon it in the revolutions of modern thought, a great darkness would fall upon a forlorn world and a deathly chill would destroy all the spiritual life of a desolate race left without God and without hope in the earth.

But it will not cease to shine as long as the Christ lives who is the Light of the World. It is

inseparably identified with him and the Holy Scriptures. It will outlive all his foes and outlast all assaults on his Word, "and share in the victory of the Bible over all forms of unbelief."⁵

⁵"The Creeds of Christendom," by Philip Schaff, D.D., LL.D., Vol. I, page 20.

III

THE CREED IS FACTUAL, NOT
SPECULATIVE

O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science (gnosis) falsely so called; which some professing have erred concerning the faith.—*St. Paul.*

Christian faith is meant to depend upon testimony, and a large part of our intellectual duty, in the case of Christianity, as also in inquiries which have nothing to do with religion, lies in submitting ourselves to evidence. Real submission of mind to good evidence, contemporary or historical, is not so common a quality as is sometimes supposed. Very many men are mentally preoccupied with their own ideas; they are full of prejudices: they see in experience, and welcome in evidence, only what they want to believe. It is the few who are real observers, who know the difference between a fact and a fancy, and when they are face to face with a fact allow it to mold and control their ideas. Undoubtedly the tendency to be too subjective in the estimate of evidence needs to be jealously watched and kept in check.—*From "The Incarnation of the Son of God," Bampton Lectures by Charles Gore.*

Our little systems have their day;

They have their day and cease to be:

They are but broken lights of thee,

And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

—*Alfred Tennyson.*

III

THE CREED IS FACTUAL, NOT SPECULATIVE

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” (1 John 1: 3.)

THE most striking characteristic of “the Creed of Christendom,” as a whole, is that it is factual, and not speculative in its nature.

The Church as a fellowship of faith rests on a foundation of fact, recorded in the Christian Scriptures and derived therefrom. Otherwise both its faith and its fellowship would be the veriest unrealities. The facts are the foundations upon which intellectual belief rests, and from the intellectual belief rises the faith from which experience springs, and in which the fellowship of faith finds its source. The faith cannot precede the belief nor the belief exist before the fact upon which it rests is known. The Christian faith did not spring from nothing by spontaneous generation, and then create the facts declared in the Creed; but the facts produced the faith which is thus formulated and affirmed.

This is the order of thought, conviction, and life set forth in the Holy Scriptures and demanded by reason. Hence, the author of the fourth

Gospel, after recording a part of the words and works of Jesus, says: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." (John 20: 30 and 31.) Thus he taught that credible testimony concerning facts is the ultimate basis of both Christian faith and Christian life.

And in like manner St. John asserts also that upon the same basis Christian fellowship stands: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 1: 1-3.) The strong word here rendered "manifested" evidently is used to declare that the eternal Word, by the incarnation, emerged from the impenetrable glory which he had with the invisible Father "before the world was," and appeared in the realm of the human senses as a tangible fact on earth. No subtle Docetism is sufficient to do justice to the obvious meaning of this striking

passage. Except in its literal sense it has no sense at all; and taken in that sense it affirms the factual foundation of the Christian faith which the Creed embodies.

In the absence of such a foundation nothing would remain of the Christian religion but a dim, vague, and formless sentiment, having in itself neither life nor the power of producing life. It would be devitalized and denatured, and it would be as unreal as an imaginary shadow of a non-existing object.

No religion can survive without a Creed, and the strength of any Creed is in exact proportion to the actuality of the facts upon which it reposes. A factless faith is a mere mist rising out of a myth and fading into a superstition.

Such is not the case with the Christian religion. "This thing was not done in a corner." It is inseparable from a series of well-authenticated historical events, which occurred under the focalized and searching lights of Jewish religion, Roman imperialism, and Grecian philosophy. It outshone, overcame, and outlived them all in a gospel of fact which has proved to be the power of God unto salvation.

From nation to nation, and race to race, unincumbered and unhindered by identification with the tenets of any speculative system or systems whatsoever, it moved by the proclamation of great facts in which men, both Jews and Gentiles,

saw the power of God and the wisdom of God authoritatively revealed.

The essence of the apostolate committed to its first propagators was the command to be witnesses to Jesus, with particular reference to the fact of the resurrection. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1: 8.) According to the apostolic historian, these were the last words of Jesus to his immediate disciples: "When he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight." (Acts 1: 9.) "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the words with signs following." (Mark 16: 20.)

The factual nature of the gospel as it was first preached to the Jewish people by the Apostles, "beginning at Jerusalem" before going to "all nations" (Luke 24: 47), is revealed by the bitter hostility of the party which chiefly opposed them and persecuted them.

The bitterest adversaries of Jesus in the days of his flesh were the Pharisees; but the fiercest foes of the Apostles were the Sadducees. The explanation of the matter is easy; "for the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both." (Acts 23: 8.)

Hence the first arrest and imprisonment of Peter and John at Jerusalem was because they proclaimed the revolutionizing fact of "Jesus and the resurrection." "As they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached *through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.*" (Acts 4: 1 and 2.)

When the Apostles, on the day following their arrest, were arraigned before the Jewish Sanhedrin, the gravamen of the offense with which they were charged was the preaching of this gospel of fact: and the issue of their trial was a command, accompanied by a strait threat "not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus" (Acts 4: 18). But they gave no sort of submission to this sentence to silence. On the contrary, they reiterated the facts which they had "seen and heard" and asserted that they did so in obedience to the will of God. "Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than to God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (Acts 4: 19 and 20.)

Going forth from the menacing presence of their persecutors, they "went to their own company," and with undiminished confidence and undismayed courage continued to preach "with all boldness" the gospel of fact to which they

were the divinely appointed witnesses. Fearless of Sadducaic power and threats, "with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 4: 33.)

If with speculative theories like those framed by a number of ancient heretics, and revived by the liberalists of modernism in the present day, they had explained away the resurrection of Jesus and evaporated the facts of his incarnation, they would have escaped all further persecution. But Christianity would have perished in unworthy pacifism, and above its grave men would not have taken the pains to inscribe so much as the epitaph "*Requiescat in pace.*"

Fortunately for mankind there was too much faith in the hearts of the Apostles, and too much reality in their faith, to allow them to betray their great gospel of fact by accommodating its glorious good news to the vain speculations of "the wisdom of this world, and the philosophies of the princes of this world, that come to nought" (1 Cor. 2: 6). Fortunately their immediate successors, and "the noble army of the martyrs" who followed them, obtained and maintained a "like precious faith"; and so at last, even to us in these distant lands and far-off times, has been transmitted the "great salvation," which at the first began to be spoken of the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him" (Heb. 2: 3), and is attested by a great cloud of witnesses to the facts of "the common salvation" revealed

in "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

Many important and far-reaching consequences flow from the factual nature of "the Creed of Christendom," as opposed to any and all speculative systems.

It was to protect the integrity of the factual foundation of Christianity that the Apostles' Creed was framed, and its expansion in the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds was brought to pass. All these formulations of faith were constituted to defend the fundamental facts of the gospel against the attacks of corrosive speculations which threatened to eat away the very substance of Christian belief and thereby enfeeble, if not eventually overthrow, Christian life.

These speculative assaults upon the faith, which the œcumenical creeds were constituted to resist, were directed in the main upon the Person of Christ, even as are the various forms in which they have been revived in the present time. Hence the œcumenical creeds are most clear and cogent in their Christological declarations. With one voice they cry to God against ancient heresies and modern heretics: "Of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, they have gathered together."

The Nicene Creed in particular is most emphatic in its clauses concerning the Christ which were designed to be bulwarks against the assaults of the Arians who were trying to substitute

philosophical speculations *about* Christ for the great fact *of* Christ upon which the faith of his followers rested. As it was framed to strengthen, not to change or to contradict the Apostles' Creed, so subsequent credal statements also were made to support it. "While the first Council of Nicæa had established the eternal, preëxistent Godhead of Christ, the symbol of the Fourth Ecumenical Council relates to the incarnate Logos, as he walked upon earth, and sits on the right hand of the Father. It is directed against the errors of Nestorius and Eutyches, who agreed with the Nicene Creed as opposed to Arianism, but set the Godhead of Christ in a false relation to his humanity. It substantially completes the orthodox christology of the ancient Church; for the definitions added during the Monophysite and Monothelite controversies are few and comparatively unessential. As the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity stands midway between Tritheism and Sabellianism, so the Chalcedonian formula strikes the true mean between Nestorianism and Eutychianism."¹

It is often charged in sneering terms that the Church imported into the œcumenical creeds current phases of the philosophy of the Græco-Roman world and perverted the simplicity of the primitive gospel with metaphysical subtleties. Nothing could be further from the truth. The

¹"The Creeds of Christendom," by Philip Schaff, D.D., LL.D., Vol. I, page 30.

creeds were made to protect the historic facts of the truth as it is in Jesus against the corrupting intrusion of pagan speculations into the field of evangelical faith.

The "damnatory clauses," which disfigure some of the creeds, and which strike so harshly our modern ears, show how intense was the zeal of the men who framed them to defend the Person of Christ who reveals in the highest the glory of the triune God and brings salvation to a sin-sick world. They were not pale-faced pacifists, who were "not valiant for the truth upon the earth" (Jer. 9: 3); but they were pure and brave "men who hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 15: 26). If the sharpness of their anathemas cannot be approved, due admiration of their fidelity cannot be withheld. Around the Person of the Son, as the Captain of their Salvation, they rallied with dauntless devotion, and about him all the wars for Christian belief must ever be waged against all "the armies of the aliens" of rationalism. "In the great struggle between faith and doubt the key of the position is the Person of Christ himself, and so long as the obvious meaning of the gospel narrative as to the life, character, and work of that central figure can be accepted 'as fact and not delusion,' no weapon against Christianity can prevail."²

²"Christ the Central Evidence of Christianity," by Rev. Principal Cairns, in "Present-Day Tracts," Vol. I, page 1.

The factual nature of "the Creed of Christendom" is now, as in the past, the defensive bulwark of "the obvious meaning of the gospel narrative" against all speculative theories by which liberalism would explain it away and all specious dogmas of rationalism which would empty it of its significance while claiming to preserve its spiritual "value."

The factual nature of "the Creed of Christendom" assures the fixity of its truth as against all the changeful forms of rationalistic theories.

A fact that is a fact cannot be changed, not even by the omnipotence of Deity. "God could indeed annihilate the universe, but not the fact that there had been a universe. If the universe were annihilated, all the facts, even the most insignificant, which constitute its history, would remain eternally true, and not even almighty power could alter even one of them."³

There may be development of doctrine deduced from a matter of fact, but such development must be in harmony with the fact, and not in contradiction of it. It cannot reasonably diverge from doctrines previously derived from the fact unless it is shown that the previous deductions misrepresented the fact. Hence arises the continuity of Christian doctrine from age to age whereby it becomes more explicit by the expansion of that which was at first implicit. It is like

³"Creeds or No Creeds?" by Charles Harris, D.D., page 61.

the growth of a child into a man, which is not by the death of the child and in its place the substitution of another, but by the persistence of vital identity.

The identity of the truth must be preserved, and no inconsistency with the fact can be justly called a development of it. This view of "the progress of doctrine" has prevailed in the Church from the beginning, but in it there is held nothing in common with the pious proposals of "advanced thought" put forth in the various speculative theories of the modernists, derived from their postulates of immanentism and the relativity of human knowledge.

The difference between a sane view of the development of doctrine and the abnormal notion of the modernists is well stated in a recent work by an English clergyman of extensive learning and sound judgment, who says: "The essential difference between the traditional view of development and that of Modernism is that whereas the former assumes development from first principles which have never changed, and have controlled the process throughout, the latter assumes that the first principles themselves have changed, are changing, and will change yet more, the only permanent thing about Christianity being its 'spirit' or 'idea' or 'orientation.' Indeed, Modernists usually hold, not merely that dogmas may change, but that they may be even transmitted, in Hegelian fashion, into their op-

posites, as when the article of the Creed which affirms Christ's birth of a Virgin is 'developed' in the Modernist system into an express denial of his Mother's virginity, and the article which affirms his Resurrection into an express denial that his buried body ever rose."⁴

Against this migratory method of Modernism the fixed factuality of "the Creed of Christendom" stands opposed. Otherwise there would be left no stable form of Christianity at all, no agreement in the household of faith, no harmony with apostolic teaching in the past, nothing definite for missionary propagation in the present, and nothing permanent for transmission to the generations to come in the future.

In that case the Christian revelation would be reduced to the level of a changeful philosophy, and be open to Rousseau's criticism of the philosophers of whom he said: "I have consulted our philosophers. I have read their books. I have examined their opinions. I find them all proud, positive, and dogmatic, even in their pretended skepticism; knowing everything and proving nothing, and ridiculing one another. If you count the number of them, each one is reduced to himself; they never unite, but to dispute." That is an exact and just characterization of the present-day Modernists who by their delusive dogma of the development of doctrine are doomed to theological vagrancy more desperate and hopeless

⁴"Creeds or No Creeds?" by Charles Harris, D.D., page 29.

than the roaming of the "Wandering Jew." No two of them agree for long, and none among them believes the same thing finally.

Quite as objectionable as this *ignis fatuus* view of "doctrinal development," is the kindred and misleading modernistic theory of the "symbolic interpretation" of Christian truth, which also is opposed by the factual nature of the "Creed of Christendom."

What most Modernists mean by the "symbolic interpretation" of the facts of the Creed is not very clear; but it is too plain for doubt, or debate, that any such interpretation to be safe and sound must be based upon, and not contradictory of, the facts which it seeks to interpret. No other form of symbolism can be justified before the bar of reason or the tribunal of common sense. If an admitted fact may be virtually denied by the symbolic interpretation of it, symbolism supplants substance, and all history becomes an artfully arranged allegory, or a series of cunningly devised metaphors.

Again, there is another theory which, while it seems more pious, is scarcely less misleading in its method for evading the facts of the Creed and the legitimate doctrines derived from them. It is the theory which claims to derive Christian truth from experience, and make experience a test of doctrine and the criterion by which to determine the nature of revealed facts. This is to exalt emotional experience above reason, and

to reverse the order of nature in the apprehension of truth and its realization in the soul. Experience does not determine truth, but arises from it. This is the plain meaning of the teaching of St. Paul in the passage in which he says: "Who-soever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? . . . So then faith cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. 10: 13-17.) Anterior to the hearing of the word there is neither calling upon God nor belief in Christ.

If a subjective experience precedes and gives form to doctrinal truth, Jesus blundered when to the multitudes to whom he gave the parables of the kingdom he said: "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." (Matt. 13: 9.) If the theory that doctrine is born of experience be correct, he should have said: "Let every one think for himself and the experience which will arise from his self-sufficient cogitation will yield sound doctrine."

If every soul's subjective experience is sufficient to discover and determine doctrine, there can be no possible necessity whatsoever for an objective revelation. Perhaps the motive of men who thus overmagnify experience is the desire to minify to get rid of the divine revelation.

The relation of personal experience to religious

truth is very close and very vital; but to elevate it above the truth revealed in Christ is to enthroned it above Him and subject Him to its judgment.

Moreover, the revealed truth declared in the Creed has determined normal Christian experience for nearly two thousand years. Is no weight to be attached to that marvelous body of "Christian consciousness"? It has validated the Creed by a long and unbroken line of experience. The marching hosts of the faithful in all ages and climes unite in singing the joyous lines,

"What we have felt and seen,
With confidence we tell;
And publish to the sons of men
The signs infallible."

Is their exultant experience to be accounted as nothing worth when brought in comparison with the experience of a limited number of latitudinarian rationalists in the present day? "The Modernist is continually appealing to 'experience.' Let him well weigh the fact that the doctrines of the Nicene Creed are supported by a volume and weight of experience than which none can be greater—viz., the *consensus sanctorum et fidelium et theologorum* for nearly two thousand years. What modern Creed, especially what Modernist Creed, has behind it a millionth part of that experience?"⁵

⁵"Creeds or No Creeds?" by Charles Harris, D.D., page 255,

Christian experience, if sound, must conform to the Christian facts, and cannot bend those facts to make them conform to it. It is still necessary to stand on the factual foundation of faith and to heed the apostolic exhortation which saith: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." (1 John 4: 1-3.)

This factual Creed, and the living faith which springs from the belief of it, cannot be safely exchanged for any shifting creedlessness which rests for a moment like a fleeting shadow on the surface of a changeful experience without relation to the fact of the historic Christ. To make such an exchange would be to substitute for the gospel, with its message of "good tidings of great joy to all people" (Luke 2: 10), speculative systems unintelligible to the great majority of men and not acceptable to any men for long.

Only a creed of fact can be grasped by the common people, and the faith alone which rests on such a creed can by any possibility become what the apostles called "the common salvation" (Jude 3) and "the common faith" (Titus 1: 4).

Of Jesus it is recorded that "the common people heard him gladly" (Mark 12: 37); but it is nowhere recorded that the common people in any land or in any time ever heard gladly speculating philosophers.

Speculative theorizers "darken counsel by words without knowledge" (Job 38: 2), and shut the gates of truth against the multitudes of mankind. For the most part they fall under the denunciation pronounced by Jesus upon some to whom he said: "Ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." (Luke 11: 52.) From the days of the Gnostics, with their assumed superiority of knowledge, they have refused to "consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness" (1 Tim. 6: 3). But a divine revelation of fact, like the sun, shines for all, and descends to the plane of the lowliest soul's needs. Revealed truth through Christ the Revealer opens a highway of holy living in which any wayfarer of earth may walk without erring.

It is no wonder that for a revelation brought to the level of all the perishing multitudes of earth Jesus gave thanks to God, saying: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, but hast revealed them unto babes." (Matt. 11: 25.) Most naturally after such a

thanksgiving he stretched forth his hands and cried: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11: 28.) Not from the lips of a philosopher could such words have fallen, and not in any or all the philosophies of earth can be found the rest of soul which comes from the faith which "stands not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2: 5).

This is the firm foundation laid for the saints of the Lord in his excellent Word; and "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3: 11).

IV

THE CHRIST IN THE CREED: HIS
VIRGIN BIRTH

It is a fact we cannot ignore that the great bulk of the opposition to the Virgin Birth comes from those who do not recognize a supernatural element in Christ's life at all. I do not state this as a reproach, but as a mark of their modernity—I call attention to it only that we may see exactly where we stand in the discussion. It is not with these writers, as we soon come to discover, a question of the Virgin Birth alone, but a question of the whole view we are to take of Jesus in his Person and work; not a question of this single miracle, but a question of *all* miracles.—*James Orr, M.A., D.D.*

Natural conception produces natural personality. But the personality of Jesus was not natural. Jesus was, on the assumption that Christianity is true, both God and man. Since then, his incarnate personality was supernatural, it was fitting that it should be brought into existence by a supernatural act. So closely does the idea of his supernatural conception cohere with that of his supernatural Personality, that few in our day who abandon belief in the former are able to retain faith in the latter.—*From "Pro Fide," by Charles Harris, D.D.*

IV

THE CHRIST IN THE CREED: HIS VIRGIN BIRTH

“Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.” (Luke 2: 15.)

THE supreme fact declared in the Creed is the fact of the Incarnation. It is the most stupendous of all facts known in earth or heaven, and is “the chief corner stone” of the Christian religion.

The Person of the Christ is therefore the heart of the Creed; and as the center of a circle determines every point on its perimeter, so the christological clause fixes the bounds and controls the contents of this great symbol of faith. By him creation was mediated and the Father Almighty revealed.

When, therefore, one says, “I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,” he must rest his faith upon the declaration of the Christ: “No man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.” (Luke 10: 22 and Matt. 11: 27.)

From the Father and the Son the Holy Spirit proceeds. Hence, when confession of faith in the

Holy Ghost is made, it depends upon his word who said: "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14: 26.)

Upon the knowledge of Jesus, the Christ, as the Son of the living God, not acquired by the natural processes of learning used by flesh and blood, but revealed by the Father which is in heaven, his deathless Church is founded (Matt. 14: 17 and 18); and belief in it is the recognition of it as "his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1: 23); for "he is the head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preëminence" (Col. 1: 18).

Any real and reasonable belief in the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting depends upon what Jesus Christ is and what he reveals; for by him life and immortality have been brought to light through the gospel (2 Tim. 1: 10).

Thus we see that all the clauses of the Creed gather about and issue from its Christological declarations of fact.

The Word made flesh is the Alpha and Omega of the Christian faith. The Person of the Incarnate Son of God is at once the center of belief around which the faithful rally and the point of attack upon which the assaults of unbelief are

delivered. Not to his teachings, but to Himself, the foes of faith object most sharply. Such has been the case in the past and such it is in the present.

To some he is a stumblingblock and to others he is the embodiment of incredible foolishness, while to them who believe he is the revelation of both the power and the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1: 22-24).

Opposition to Him takes on various forms from time to time; but it persists. The battle shifts, but the warfare of the carnal mind, which is enmity to God, never ceases to be waged against his Son.

Sometimes men seek to dispose of Him by reducing him to a mere myth, accounting him to be the creation of imagination overlaying and disguising the simple history of a peasant prophet who made no claims to deity. But all that method of doubt has disappeared from our day. The fact of Christ has compelled recognition. "All attempts to resolve him into a myth, a legend, an idea—and hundreds of such attempts have been made—have drifted over the enduring reality of his character and left not a rack behind. The result of all criticism, the final verdict of enlightened common sense, is that Christ is historical. He is such a Person as men could not have imagined if they would, and would not have imagined if they could. He is neither Greek myth nor Hebrew legend. The artist capable of fashion-

ing him did not exist, nor could he have found the materials. A nonexistent Christianity did not spring out of the air and create a Christ. A real Christ appeared in the world and created Christianity. This is what we mean by the gospel of fact."¹

A more common form of opposition to the Incarnate Redeemer has been, and is, to explain away this central fact of Christianity by resorting to various schemes of immanentism, adoptionism, and apotheosis, by which to bring the Person of the Son within the limits of naturalism. A notable example of this sort of speculation is that of Paul of Samosata, who denied the preëxistence of Jesus, affirming that "he did not exist before Mary, but received from her the origin of his being," and contending that he was a mere man in the ordinary human sense, and that the Spirit dwelt in him as in other men, although in a supereminent degree. Strange to say he affirmed the Virgin Birth, and taught that the man Jesus was eventually deified by a process of gradual development and growth in holiness. By the Council of Antioch, A.D. 269, Paul was divested of his episcopal office and excommunicated for these fantastic and heretical teachings.

Most amazingly these incredible and discreditable dogmas of the arrogant bishop of Antioch have been revived by some modernists

¹"The Gospel for an Age of Doubt," by Henry van Dyke, pages 58 and 59.

in our time who have departed even further from the faith than did the Samosatene heresiarch; for they cast doubt upon the sinlessness of Jesus which he did not question and they deny the Virgin Birth which he affirmed.

The root of this and kindred speculations, whereby the Incarnation is denied or dissolved, is found in the rejection of the possibility and credibility of miracles—a dogma of doubt proclaimed by Hume, accepted by Kant, expanded by Hegel, and adopted by all the Modernists of our day. Herein, also, is the source of their denial of the Virgin Birth of the Christ. Some of them profess belief in the Incarnation, although they deny the miraculous conception of our Lord by the Holy Ghost. It is scarcely possible, however, for them to hold this anomalous position long; for it is obvious that any real incarnation whatsoever must be miraculous, whether brought to pass by natural generation or by supernatural birth. The real difficulty in the matter is not that of believing in the Virgin Birth, but of believing in any Incarnation at all.

In this connection it is worthy of observation that men who reject the doctrine of the Virgin Birth are disposed to explain away the Incarnation and deny the preëxistence of the Son of God, while those who accept the doctrine of the Virgin Birth find it enables them to hold without doubt, or wavering, all the truth concerning his supernatural Person.

The miracle of the Virgin Birth aids faith and nourishes piety. Doubt of it enfeebles faith and tends to impiety. In a recent work of great merit appears this striking passage:

Modernists usually contend that the Incarnation is to them, and ought to be to others, as easily credible without the Virgin Birth as with it; but the fact remains that it is not. For nine out of ten ordinary men in this, as in every other age, the outward sign of the Virgin Birth makes the Incarnation far easier to believe, and that for an obvious reason. If the Incarnation was a fact, it follows, of course, that the personality of Jesus was both continuous and also discontinuous with ordinary human nature—continuous, because he was true and perfect man, and discontinuous, because he was true and perfect God. The sign of the Virginal Conception emphasizes both these aspects—continuity, because the Redeemer took true human nature of the substance of his mother, and discontinuity, because the usual order of nature was visibly interrupted by the circumstance that he had no human father.

Not only logic, but also history shows that there is a most intimate connection between the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation and the doctrine of His Conception by a Virgin. The oldest deniers of the Incarnation that we know, the first-century Ebionites, who denied our Lord's divinity, and the equally early Docetæ, who denied his humanity, were united in their denial of the Virgin Birth, and it was against them, as affording a safeguard for the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation, that the doctrine of the Virgin Birth was elevated to dogmatic rank and included in the earliest draft of the Apostles' Creed, which can hardly be later than about A.D. 100, for it was already familiar to Ignatius (about A.D. 110).

Later history tells the same story. The Unitarians, for example, originally believed the Virgin Birth, but they have gradually become conscious that their

denial of the Incarnation necessitates its abandonment. Similarly, the recent abandonment of the doctrine of the Incarnation by a bulk of the Liberal Protestants of Germany was prepared for by the denial of the Virgin Birth, and the insistent demand that the article of the Creed which affirms it should be "symbolically" understood.²

The miraculous entry of the Son of God into human nature and human history accords well with the centrality of the Incarnation in the Christian religion, and the narratives of the Nativity are not to be set aside to make room for any presuppositions and speculative theories concerning the possibility of the miraculous; for the fact of the Incarnation is "more important than any other in the entire history of the world, and one that throws more light upon the true nature of God than all other facts put together."

The Virgin Birth is to be examined as a matter of fact, and accepted or rejected as such, without reference to speculative presuppositions. It is worse than idle to say that "the modern mind cannot accept it" because it involves "a biological miracle." If such is the case, it is all the worse for that pretentious phantom called "the modern mind," which confesses that it is so warped by prejudices of doubt and so biased by skeptical speculations that it has lost the capacity for ascertaining by examination of testimony what is, or is not, a fact.

²"Creeds or No Creeds?" by Charles Harris, D.D., page 292.

What is the evidence for the Virgin Birth?

It is found first of all in two Gospel narratives which are most obviously independent of each other—the Gospel according to Matthew and the Gospel according to Luke. While differing in minor details, they agree in the major facts that Joseph and Mary were husband and wife, that they lived at first in Nazareth of Galilee, but went to Bethlehem of Judea where Jesus was born in the days of Herod the king, that he was not the son of Joseph but was the child of Mary, and that both professed to believe that he was conceived of the Holy Ghost while his Mother was yet a Virgin.

Evidently the account given by Matthew, which of the two is more brief, was derived from Joseph, while the fuller story by Luke was obtained directly from Mary.

For the purposes of this discussion consideration will be confined to the narrative by Luke, who has been justly characterized as “a historian of the first rank.”³

There was a time when it was the vogue among rationalistic critics and liberalistic theologians to depreciate, if not discredit, St. Luke. His authorship of the Gospel bearing his name was questioned, and the date of the document was fixed as being later than the times of the apostles. But all that has now passed away. Facts es-

³Sir William Ramsay, in “Bearing of Recent Discovery,” page 222.

tablished beyond reasonable doubt—admitted even by such radical critics as Harnack—confirm the traditional view concerning both the date and the authorship of the third Gospel.

It cannot be successfully denied that St. Luke, upon the testimony of eyewitnesses, who knew the Christ in the flesh, set down with care and conscientiousness those things which were “most surely believed among them” (Luke 1: 1 and 2), including the “Narrative of the Nativity.” He claims, and with sincerity doubtless, that he “had perfect understanding of all things from the very first” (Luke 1: 3). His story is unfolded with marked sobriety of style and in a manner most restrained. Perfect sincerity is impressed upon every line. The writer manifestly believed all he wrote concerning the birth of Jesus, and set down the facts deliberately with a clear apprehension of all their significance and consequences. There is no slightest reason to suspect that he was a man of a superstitious or credulous mind. He was in position to know what was generally believed by the members of the Christian circle, and the source of his information was most probably Mary herself. It is more than probable that she was living in Palestine during the years 57 and 58 when Luke was there. By his allusions to her he sets forth her thoughts and feelings in a way that he could not have conceived without her own expression of them. Thus concerning the Annunciation of the angel to her

he says: "And when she saw him she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be." (Luke 1: 29.) With reference to the appearance of the heavenly host to the shepherds and the report which they spread of what they had heard and seen he says: "But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart." (Luke 2: 19.) Who but her could have told him so? And, if she told him the story, did the Mother of our Redeemer speak falsely? Or, did she believe it herself, and did she recall the wondrous facts and relate them in guileless simplicity and utter sincerity?

If she spoke falsely and St. Luke propagated the falsehood, why did the Christian Church receive without question the narrative from its first appearance? With the exception of the narrow sect of the Ebionites and some of the early Gnostics, the Church from Apostolic times accepted as indisputable the fact of the Virgin Birth, and valued it highly as attesting the humanity of the Christ and revealing at the same time the superhuman dignity of his nature.

If myth it was, its mythical character is almost as marvelous as the fact alleged and enshrined in it; for it could not have sprung from either Jewish or Gentile soil, and there was no one in the Church capable of conceiving such a fabulous legend.

If the silence of the other writers of the New

Testament concerning the Virgin Birth be urged as a reason for doubting the fact, it may be replied that their silence is easily explicable if the narratives of the Nativity are true. It lay outside the scope of their writings and their immediate purpose. But if they are untrue, their silence is past understanding. Mark, the spokesman of Peter, John the beloved disciple, and Paul, who had Luke for his companion and helper, would most surely have exposed the falsity of the story if it had been a baseless fable.

But to the fact St. John evidently refers in adoring wonder when he says: "And the Word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth." (John 1: 14.)

We may be sure that St. Paul, knowing as he must have known what Luke narrated, would not have tolerated for a moment such a superstitious and incredible story, if he had believed it to be false. Certainly if it had been untrue he would never have written to the Galatian Churches, where artful Judaizers were seeking to supplant him, these words: "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. 4: 4 and 5.) Assuredly he would have given no such color of approval

to a falsehood so monstrous, if the story of the Virgin Birth were untrue.

Why should any writer of the New Testament apply to Jesus the peculiar and mysterious words, "the only begotten Son of God," if there was nothing exceptional or miraculous in his birth to which the phrase pointed?

Moreover, why was Jesus silent on the subject? He was the only man who ever chose to be born into the earth. He claimed preëxistence with the Father from the foundation of the world, and he declared that he came freely and voluntarily in the flesh to do the will of God. Would the uncreated, eternal, and holy Son of God have chosen to come to men by way of a polluted maternity and to have projected his kingdom in the world on a base falsehood and a foundation of blasphemous fable?

It is agreed on all hands that he lived a sinless life among men, and sinlessness is as truly a miracle in the moral world as the Virgin Birth is in the physical world. Was the sinless Son of God born of a base mother who was deflowered of her virginity and who spoke falsely in order to cover her disgrace? And did his Church arise from a source so shameful, and carry with it a falsehood so brazenly fixed in its Creed and so constantly repeated in its worship? Such notions are as absurd as they are impious.

Can the Church of the twentieth century renounce its faith in the supernatural birth of its

incarnate Lord, and yet suffer no real loss thereby? Has a truth that was so dear and so nourishing to the Church of the first century become in our day a dry husk out of which all vital and nutritive qualities have been extracted? Nay, a thousand times let the answer be.

Men may be holy and enjoy salvation who have not believed what was never revealed to them. But truth that has been once revealed to faith cannot be deliberately disbelieved or accounted as nonessential, without serious damage to the soul and sad hurt to the life.

The doctrine of the Virgin Birth is not a superfluous tenet nor a sterile dogma. It is an indispensable part of that divine record of the Incarnate Son of God in whom "was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4).

At His birth a new era in the history of heaven and earth opened, and the date lines of time were changed. Whether men have, or have not, fixed upon the correct date for their annual celebration of the transcendent event, it remains that something occurred in Bethlehem nearly two millenniums ago which has been more influential for good among men than all the campaigns of the martial leaders of the earth and all the efforts of the sages and statesmen of the ages. Since that event the whole world is changed and can never be the same again. The very air of the earth is perfumed with heavenly odors, exhaled from the frankincense and myrrh poured out by wise men

upon the Babe of Bethlehem, and the fragrance of that first offering of faith in the Incarnate One seems nothing less than a breath of the Paradise of God wafted upon mankind from above.

Not with doubting Modernists will we carp at the Virgin Birth "as a biological miracle which the modern mind cannot accept"; but rather with the believing shepherds of old will all faithful souls say one to another: "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us." (Luke 2: 15.) Returning from the manger cradle, they will make known that faith which the primitive Church proclaimed when joyously it confessed belief in him who was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. Thus will they assert the beginning of the era of the Incarnation which, once having begun, can never end, as long as the risen and ascended Christ reigns "above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. 1: 21).

V

THE CHRIST IN THE CREED: HIS
RESURRECTION

6

The first business of scientific men is to look at facts. Many facts which at first sight seemed to contradict previously ascertained laws were ultimately found to indicate the presence of a higher law. Why are men of science so terrified by the word "miracle"? This even may, like the visit of a comet, have occurred once in the world's history; but it need not on that account be irreducible to law or to reason. The resurrection of Christ is unique, because he is unique. Find another Person bearing the same relation to the race and living the same life, and you will find a similar resurrection. To say that it is unusual or unprecedented is to say nothing at all to the purpose.

Besides, those who reject the resurrection of Christ as impossible are compelled to accept an equally astounding moral miracle—the miracle, I mean, that those who had the best means of ascertaining the truth and every possible inducement to ascertain it should all have been deceived, and that this deception should have been the most fruitful source of good, not only to them, but to the whole world.—*"The Epistle to the Corinthians,"* by Marcus Dods, D.D., in *the Expositor's Bible*.

But if the Incarnation was necessary at the moment when it took place, its continuance is not less necessary now. It would not be enough to tell us that at one time the Son of God became incarnate, if after a short sojourn of three-and-thirty years here below he laid aside his humanity and returned to that condition in which he existed before he came into the world. . . . The spirit of the Christian life, therefore, cannot spring from the thought of any merely past Incarnation of God. The Incarnation must be continued. If it was ever necessary, it is necessary now. For all ages a Personal Incarnate Lord is the only "way" to the Father; and for us an Incarnate Lord must be a Risen Lord. Take away his Resurrection, and the very foundation of our spiritual life is removed.—*From "The Resurrection of Our Lord,"* by William Milligan, D.D.

V

THE CHRIST IN THE CREED: HIS RESURRECTION

“The Lord is risen indeed.” (Luke 24: 34.)

THE Christ being the center of the Creed, from which center all else radiates and around which all else gathers, the most aggressive assaults of doubt have been delivered against his Person.

From the days of the early Gnostics and Docetists to the present time, rationalists have been attempting to vivisect his personality in order to bring his nature within the limits of their philosophic presuppositions and conform it to their speculative systems.

In our day the most frequent and general attacks upon his Person are denials of his Virgin Birth and Bodily Resurrection, which at bottom are denials of his Incarnation. Various forms of Hegelian immanence are put forth as reasonable interpretations of the facts of the Incarnation and as substitutes for the doctrine. The propounders of these liberalistic dogmas have revived in the present time all the heretical theories against which the defensive barriers of the historic Creeds were erected originally.

With reference to the bodily resurrection of our Lord the negative critics have been especially busy in exhuming ancient errors to explain it

away and in inventing ingenious devices to exclude the miraculous elements from the evangelic records of the transcendent event. Nevertheless the foundation of the ancient Creed withstands the assaults of its modern assailants even as it withstood in the centuries ago the opposition of all its foes. It must be so; for now in the twentieth century, as in the first century, the declaration of St. Paul is true that Christianity without the resurrection is vacuous in content and futile in force. Were the great Apostle now writing an epistle to our modernistic propagandists, he would say doubtless what he said to the rationalists of Corinth: "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." (1 Cor. 15: 14.) Concerning the fact of the resurrection of Jesus, he would not to present-day rationalists, any more than to their ancient predecessors, make any sort of concession or compromise. Nor can the Church of to-day allow the great fact to be denied or to be explained away by substituting for it a specious theory of the *transmigration* of his soul into a phantom called a "spiritual body," thus divesting him of his essential humanity. His body was exalted and glorified by his resurrection, but it was not left behind in the earth, disappearing forever under the decree of "dust to dust and ashes to ashes." His was a real resurrection, through and by which he "took again his body with all things appertaining to the perfection of

man's nature." In the acceptance and assertion of that historic truth the Church has been, and must be always, "steadfast and immovable."

The fact of the resurrection is the very citadel of the Christian faith. It is a stupendous miracle unlike any and all the mighty works of our Lord when he tabernacled on earth in the flesh. Of most of his miracles we have no record. In the pages of the four Gospels less than thirty are mentioned, although from the fourth Gospel we learn that myriads were wrought by him as he went about doing good. The benefits derived from all the miracles that he did, whether recorded or unrecorded, were limited to individuals, or at most to comparatively few persons. In so far as we can see, they might or might not have been done without obscuring the truth or impairing the force of the Christian religion.

But it is not so with the resurrection of our Lord. It is the very fountain of faith in him, the source from which has issued all Christian life in the past and from which must flow all Christian experience in the future.

Its centrality in the Christian system and its vital importance to its very existence was clearly apprehended by the apostles and keenly appreciated by the primitive Church.

Indeed, as has been said in a previous lecture in this series, the very existence and purpose of the apostleship rested on its chief function of witnessing to the fact of the resurrection. One

who could not by personal knowledge of the Risen Christ bear testimony to it was not qualified for the holy and authoritative office. Hence, St. Peter, immediately after the Ascension, said with reference to the choosing of a man to take the apostolate forfeited by the treachery and suicide of Judas: "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, *must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.*" (Acts 1: 21 and 22.) St. Paul, who was miraculously called to the apostolic office, recognized that ability to witness to the fact of the resurrection was its chief and indispensable function, and when doubt was cast upon his apostleship by some at Corinth, he brought the issue to a decisive settlement by the short, sharp questions: "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? *have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?*" (1 Cor. 9: 1.) In like manner he asserted his apostolic authority in the salutation of his Epistle to the Galatians, in which he describes himself as "Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, *who raised him from the dead*" (Gal. 1: 1).

The burden of his apostolic message and the preaching of all his fellow apostles was the proclamation to both Jews and Gentiles alike, "Jesus and the resurrection" (Acts 17: 18).

Nor did their teaching differ from that of Jesus himself except as it was affected by their sight of him after he was risen from the dead. The great truth of the resurrection of life penetrates all the teachings of their Lord and Master. He affirmed it when, answering the flippant and skeptical quibblings of the Sadducees, who taught that "there is no resurrection" (Acts 23: 8), he said: "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." (Matt. 22: 29.) He enforced the duty of generous hospitality to the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind by bringing to the view of his hearers the great truth, saying: "And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." (Luke 14: 14.) To his twelve apostles he foretold before his death his own resurrection. It is recorded that following the memorable incident at Cæsarea Philippi, when St. Peter made his great confession: "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." (Matt. 16: 21 and Mark 8: 31.) After his resurrection he said to them: "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved the Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24:

46-49.) Attaching to his death and resurrection such connections and consequences of world-wide salvation from sin, it is not strange that to them "he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs" (Acts 1: 3), and charged them with the high commission of witnessing to his resurrection "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1: 8).

In the fulfillment of that witnessing commission they went forth at his command, and witnessed to the fact of the resurrection even unto death. Indeed, the Greek word for "a witness" (*martus*) came eventually through their dauntless devotion to mean "a martyr."

It was their witnessing to the resurrection of Jesus that brought upon the apostles and the primitive Church the persecutions of the Sadducees, who were at that time the ecclesiastical rulers of the Jews. These fierce persecutions would have ended instantly if the apostles had ceased bearing witness to the fact that their Lord had risen, or if they had modified their testimony to the effect that his rising was no more than a "matter of visions" or "a spiritual resurrection" in no wise related to the body that had been crucified on Calvary's cross and buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. But such deceitful handling of their Lord's resurrection was utterly repugnant to them; and hence, when their persecutors "commanded them not to speak

at all nor teach in the name of Jesus," they fearlessly defied the unholy mandate.

Equally faithful, persistent, and intrepid was the unequivocal testimony borne to the resurrection by the Apostle Paul, the converted Pharisee and persecutor. In the synagogue of "Antioch in Pisidia" (Acts 8: 30-40), before the philosophical Areopagites of Athens (Acts 17: 18 and 31), before the inflamed Council of the Jews at Jerusalem (Acts 23: 6-9), in his hearing before Festus and Agrippa (Acts 26: 6-8 and 23), and wherever he went he witnessed uniformly and constantly to his Lord's resurrection.

In his Epistle to the Church at Corinth, of which he was the founder, he bore the most energetic testimony to the fact of the resurrection.

In the Church at Corinth there were those, like some in our own day, who were more concerned to conform their faith to current philosophy, rather than to conform it to revealed truth. They scouted the idea of the resurrection as a materialistic conception which was both unwelcome and unbelievable. They did not propose in plain terms to renounce flatly Christianity; but they considered it a system like any one of their own philosophies which they were perfectly free to review, revise, and, at least partially, reject. They proposed to retain only that which seemed to them essential, casting aside as worthless whatever they esteemed as

legendary additions to the simple story of Christ's earthly life; additions which, according to the science of their day, were incredible statements of impossible events.

They were ready to believe that Christ lived a beautiful life to be followed as a perfect example; taught a heavenly doctrine of morality; and died a heroic, though shameful, death. But whatever the Apostles and others might mean by affirming that he rose from the dead, these rationalists at Corinth could not and would not believe that his rising was such a physical resurrection as contravened their dogma of doubt that "there is no resurrection of the dead." At any rate, they proposed to dismiss any thought or theory of the resurrection as unimportant and unessential, if not untrue.

Doubtless they indulged the conceit that, if they differed somewhat from the Apostle, it was because they were men of broader minds, deeper learning, and more tolerant and hospitable habits of thought, without being less devoted to Christian morality and religious duty. Perhaps they imagined themselves even as being more sweet-spirited and more devout because they discarded superstitious tenets which Paul and the other Apostles held far too tenaciously and intolerantly.

Without the slightest hesitation Paul gave them to understand that to deny, or ignore, or minify Christ's resurrection is to abandon Chris-

tianity altogether; that it is to stab the faith of the Church with a deathblow at its heart, and not merely to maim one of its members, which might be useful to it, but which was not essential to its life. And such is the case. What remains, after the resurrection of Christ is eliminated from Christian faith, may be interesting; but the attention it excites is that which is attracted by a decaying corpse slumbering beneath garlands infected with the odor of death.

Strong as is the language of the Apostle, it is not too strong. He saw that a Christ who was buried and went to dust in Joseph's "new tomb" could not be the Christ of God nor the life-giving Saviour of men. He perceived most clearly that the incarnation of a Christ who died and rose did not, and could not, terminate at his crucifixion, and leave mankind more hopeless than if he had never been made flesh and dwelt among them. In short, he apprehended that to reject, or explain away, the resurrection, which is much the same as rejecting it, is to renounce Christianity altogether.

Is a fact so inseparable from the history of the Church and so vital to its life to be denied a place in its confession? Yes, if it be not supported by the most incontestable proofs. Is the testimony of the Apostles thus indisputable and conclusive? Indeed, it is.

No fact in human history is better attested than the resurrection of Jesus. This will con-

vincingly appear by a brief examination of only a small part of the testimony of the apostolic witnesses. Let the case be fairly and reasonably considered.

1. *First, there is the positive testimony of competent and credible witnesses in proof of it.*

(a) The men whose testimony is set out in the Gospels and the Acts had perfect opportunity to know the fact to which they testified; for they "accompanied with Jesus all the time when he went in and out among them, from the baptism of John unto the day this Lord was taken up from them."

(b) They were not superstitious and credulous men, for they record how full of doubts they were and how their Master reproved them for their slowness of heart to believe. (Luke 24: 25; John 20: 24-29.)

(c) They were not men of bad character, whose vices discredited them, but were men against whose moral life no impeachment was ever brought.

(d) They had no motive to deceive. They could gain nothing by preaching that Jesus had risen, if what they said was false. On the contrary, they lost everything, some losing life itself, for declaring the fact of the resurrection. As has been remarked, it was their dying for the truth which so changed the meaning of the Greek word "martyr," which signified "a wit-

ness," until it came to mean "a martyr" witnessing by his death.

Whatever may be the real, or fancied, discrepancies in the several accounts which they give of the resurrection, however their narratives may vary in minor details, they all agree unanimously that the transcendent event really and truly took place, and they had no disagreements about it while they continued to live and labor together. Some critics profess to find discrepancies between the account of the resurrection in the Gospel of Mark, the writing of which Peter is said to have inspired and directed, and the fourth Gospel, which John wrote; but those two apostolic witnesses seem to have been perfectly agreed on the day of Pentecost and even afterwards.

Moreover, when Paul wrote his first epistle to the Church at Corinth there were still living a majority of "five hundred brethren" (above two hundred and fifty) who had seen together the risen Lord, and who confirmed the testimony of Peter, James, John, and all the apostles.

It is idle to attempt to explain away all this testimony on any theory of "hallucination;" or "visions." The same delusion does not begin to possess so many persons at the same time and leave them all the same day.

2. *Furthermore, the testimony of the inspired evangelists is corroborated by the circumstances surrounding the event.* Jesus was crucified at the

time of the Passover, the greatest feast of the Jews, which drew thousands to Jerusalem, where he was tried and executed. His trial and crucifixion by the civil authorities at the instigation of the Jewish Sanhedrin made it an object of intense interest to all the inhabitants of the city and to all the visitors at the feast. His ministry of preaching and healing had excited the nation for many months, and he had entered the city shortly before his trial amid the hosannas of a great multitude. He had predicted his rising from the dead, and his prediction was known to his enemies, who took the most careful precautions against any story of its fulfillment being believed. Accordingly he was buried, the sepulcher was sealed with the seal of the Roman governor, and a centurion's guard of a hundred men was stationed by it to watch it.

Now, with the body of Jesus thus entombed and guarded, one of three things must have taken place: (a) The body lay in the grave there; (b) or, it was stolen away; (c) or, he rose from the dead. There is no other alternative conceivable.

Did it continue in the sepulcher and return to dust? Why, then, did not the foes of Christ and his followers produce the body and thus summarily end the mischievous superstition about a resurrection which in less than a week began to be proclaimed? With his lifeless body thus exhibited his disciples would have been dis-

persed beyond the possibility of their rallying again for the promotion of his cause.

Was the body stolen away? How could any one, whether friend or foe, have perpetrated the theft without detection at the time of the Pass-over, when the full moon in the Syrian sky made the night almost as bright as day, and when the eyes of thousands were fixed on the tomb in the garden around which a company of Roman soldiers kept watch? But if, despite these conditions, it was stolen, who committed the theft? His enemies? Why did they not produce it? If they had it, they had every motive to produce it, and no possible reason for not bringing it forth.

Did his disciples steal it? If so, how did they elude the guard? By bribery? For that they were too poor. By force? For that they were too timid and too powerless.

If they secured it by bribery or by force, why were they never indicted, convicted, and executed for the offense, as most assuredly they would have been if guilt could have been fixed upon them.

Again, if his followers had in their hands the mangled, lifeless, and putrefying body of Jesus, whence came their newly-found faith, which was so confident, and their restored courage, which was so fearless? Whence their death-defying zeal, by which they were able to establish so rapidly and firmly large Churches at Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, in the cities of Gala-

tia and Macedonia, and ultimately in Rome, the distant capital of the empire?

Could a conscious and corrupt fraud so revive hope and elevate moral character? Could a delusion so enthrall and empower men of their type, or of any type? Did a hallucination ever so stimulate faith, purify lives, and conquer the world?

The facts of the case admit of but one explanation. The positive testimony of upright men, corroborated most perfectly by circumstantial evidence, proves conclusively that Jesus rose from the dead.

The witness of St. Paul in his undisputed epistles, and especially in his first letter to the Corinthians, adds cumulative force to the proof supplied by the four evangelists. These epistles show that their author, within a very few years after the crucifixion of Jesus, had been converted to Christianity and changed from a cruel persecutor of the Christians to a zealous propagandist of their religion. They reveal that both he and those to whom they were addressed believed most firmly in the fact of the resurrection and considered that fact as the very foundation of the faith which they professed. They show further that this belief in the risen Jesus was prevalent in Churches as widely separated as those of Galatia, Corinth, and Rome, and that men of all parties and shades of opinion, however they differ with respect to other matters, accepted the

resurrection of Jesus as a fact about which there could be no disputing among them.

From these four epistles it is clear beyond all reasonable doubt that within a very brief space after the crucifixion the Christian Church arose on the sole foundation of confident belief that its crucified Lord had been raised from the dead, and that it achieved speedily the greatest advancement and the most wonderful triumphs throughout the Roman Empire.

What can explain these incontrovertible facts, if Jesus did not rise from the dead? Did a delusion detach Saul of Tarsus, the persecuting Pharisee, from the school of Gamaliel and bind him in deathless devotion to Jesus of Nazareth? Did the delusion, which deceived him, spread as an evil distemper throughout all the widely scattered Churches which he founded, and did it yield wherever it went a new and nobler type of life in all who were affected by it? If so, what a blessed hallucination it must have been!

By that delusion, if delusion it was, the Christian Church was brought into being with all its holy sacraments, sacred ordinances, and saving gospel. By that delusion the current of human history, bearing to ruin upon its bosom all mankind, was arrested and the world was saved from remediless corruption and hopeless despair.

If this be true, the most amazing delusion has worked wonders of redemption beyond all the power of truth to achieve. Error then is better

than knowledge and falsehood more beneficial than truthfulness; and then no motive for seeking truth remains.

A conclusion so manifestly false and so dreadfully depressing cannot be accepted by men of unbiased reason and balanced judgment. No rationalistic demands of "the modern mind" can constrain the acceptance of such an incredible and absurd decision. Sane and sincere men will not consent to bury the truth of the intellect and the hope of the heart side by side with Jesus in his tomb and leave them there in endless sepulture.

"The Lord is risen indeed," and through his gospel he has brought life and immortality to light beyond the power of doubt ever to darken with its gloomy dogmas the heavenly vision.

The Church of to-day may join with the saints of all ages in declaring its belief in the fact that the "third day he rose from the dead." And that belief justifies and illumines every other article of the faith in its simple but sublime Creed of fact.

VI

THE PERMANENCE OF THE CREED

Subtlest thought shall fail and learning falter,
Churches change, forms perish, systems go,
But our human needs, they will not alter,
Christ no after age shall e'er outgrow.

Yea, Amen! O changeless One, Thou only
Art life's guide and spiritual goal,
Thou the Light across the dark vale lonely—
Thou the eternal haven of the soul.

—*John Campbell Shairp.*

There can be no improvement upon Christianity as this was presented at the first by Christ. To say that *theology*, in the meaning of a human science of interpretation, and of logical definition and construction applied to the doctrines of Christianity, can be improved, is only to say that human imperfection, which marks whatever it touches, attaches to any system that man can frame, even though the materials furnished him be perfect and divine. But when men speak of outgrowing Christianity, of finding a truth more perfect, a way more simple, a salvation more complete, they might as well talk of dispensing with sunlight by some new patent of science for consuming the oils, gases, or metals of the earth. The very truths purporting to be intuitions of consciousness, that are brought forth to supplant Christianity, are either unconsciously derived from Christianity, or find in it full recognition and confirmation.—*From "Theology of Christ,"* by J. P. Thompson, D.D.

VI

THE PERMANENCE OF THE CREED

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day,
and forever.” (Heb. 13: 8.)

THE Creed being factual in its nature, and not speculative, the fact of the unchanging Christ, who is the ruler and revealer of “a kingdom which cannot be moved” (Heb. 12: 28), assures its permanence. Because he lives, it lives also. At its center he stands, as he stands in creation, its cohesive bond through which “by him all things consist” (Col. 1: 17).

The Kings of controversy and the Rulers of speculative systems may conspire to overthrow it, but they shall not prevail against it; for God the Father has set his anointed, who is its strength, upon his “holy hill of Zion,” declared his eternal Sonship, and pledged to him the heathen for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession (Ps. 2: 6-8). All “reasonings and every high thing that exalteth itself” against the truth as it is in Jesus in the present and in the future shall be cast down, even as in the past they have vanished away.

Plausible theories and ambitious systems, devised by strong minds and supported by great names, have clashed with the Creed since the

days of the warfare of the Sadducees upon the Apostles and the primitive Church until the present time, when truculent liberalism assails it at the center and predicts the early capitulation of its citadel and the final fall of its bulwarks and towers. But the risen Christ is in the midst of it, and it shall not be moved.

A brief consideration of the failure of all its foes in the past to achieve its defeat, and a recalling of its unbroken line of victories over the most formidable oppositions in the centuries gone, will suffice to dispel all fears for its permanence in the years to come and to assure confidence in its perpetual power. Even a partial remembrance of some of its triumphs will serve to remove the misgivings of any whose faith needs steadying in the present age of doubt and disorder.

The Apostles had scarcely passed away from the Church on earth to the "Church of the First-born" above when the metaphysical abnormality called Gnosticism appeared. Indeed, its incipient forms were beginning to be evident when St. Paul wrote the Epistle to the Colossians in which he condemned its tenets.

It was a conglomerate of pagan, Jewish, and Christian elements brought forth in the dying hours, and made of the dismembered fragments, of the old creeds of heathenism, the disintegrated principles of the old philosophies, and the obsolescent remains of Judaism. It was put

forth and expounded by a pretentious aristocracy of minds who claimed for themselves superior knowledge and loftier salvation than was possible to the common herd of unenlightened and unenlightenable humanity.

The genetic principle from which Gnosticism sprang was the notion that matter was both evil and eternal; and this principle led its adherents to hold in contempt the cosmogony of Moses and to hold docetic conceptions of the Person of Christ. The harmonious conjunction of the divine and human, which the New Testament revealed in its doctrine of the Incarnation, stood in direct opposition to the very basis of Gnosticism. The visible and the invisible, the finite and the infinite, God and man, the advocates of the system held could not combine; in this they all agreed. But while the Judaizing schools of Gnosticism divided Christ into two distinct persons, one of heaven and one of earth, who had only become one at his baptism in the Jordan and who had separated at the crucifixion, the other Oriental sections of the system held that his earthly manifestation in the flesh was a mere shadow and his entire humanity was a misty phantom. Most amazingly the advocates and exponents of this complicated conglomeration of monotheism, pantheism, spiritualism, and materialism persisted in claiming their right to the Christian name, and pretended to take their stand upon the Bible. To do this,

however, with even the slightest color of justice, they gave to the Holy Scriptures the most fanciful and allegorical interpretations, somewhat after the manner of "the symbolical interpretations" of some present-day Modernists. While this wild scheme of eclecticism, which sprang up in the first century, spread over the whole civilized world in the second, it was vigorously and unremittingly combated by the men of the true Christian faith. Nevertheless, it held on its way, and its adherents feigned the greatest surprise, not to say the warmest indignation, that they were not fully recognized as most faithful followers of Christianity and most acceptable members of the large body known as the Christian Church. True, there were innumerable schisms among them; for Gnosticism was a sect quite "inclusive," and, therefore, very disputatious. Perhaps it would have gone further and stood its ground far longer had it not been for the strife and controversies prevalent in its own camp. Notwithstanding its internal contentions, it moved rapidly and extended over wide areas, although some of its adherents rejected the humanity of Jesus and others denied his divinity, while calling themselves Christian. But Gnosticism passed away, and save for limited and transitory revivals of it which have come from time to time until now, it has had no place among men for many centuries.

In the second century came Celsus, an Epi-

curean philosopher, holding some of the materialistic tenets of Gnosticism, delivering a fierce attack upon Christianity; deriding coarsely the Virgin Birth of Christ, which he held to be as unacceptable to the thought of his day as it is now alleged to be unacceptable to "the modern mind"; and condemning unsparingly the Christians for their unreasoning credulity with reference to things miraculous. His vicious treatise, which was entitled "The True Word," has perished, only such fragments of it remaining as are found in the quotations made from it by Origen in his overwhelming refutation of it in his work known as "*Contra Celsum*."

In the third century—about A.D. 250–260—came Sabellianism, deriving its name from Sabellius, a celebrated African heresiarch, who revived and restated a subtle theory of the Trinity which had been taught before he lived, and gave it new standing by ingenious explanations and arguments, whereby its essential Unitarianism was disguised and concealed.

His speculative theory was that the Son and the Holy Spirit were not divine persons, but powers or manifestations of God. This anti-trinitarianism prevailed extensively for a time, and has been embraced by individuals and small sects in all the ages since Sabellius propounded it; but it has been regarded by all the great branches of the Church as a dangerous heresy, without sound basis in either reason or revelation.

Shortly after the middle of the third century, the celebrated author of Arianism came to Alexandria from Libya. At first he attacked Alexander, the Bishop of Alexandria, for saying in a discourse upon the Trinity that it contained but one single essence or indivisible unity of substance, alleging that such a conception was impossible to the human mind, and accusing the Bishop of Sabellianism. The dispute became quite warm and in the course of the controversy Arius went beyond his first statement of the absolute distinctness of person between God the Father and God the Son, and maintained that the Son was not coequal and coeternal with the Father, but only the first and highest of all created beings, created out of nothing by and of God's free will, and that he ought not to be ranked with the Father.

Arius was handsome and prepossessing in person, astute in argument, and eloquent in speech. By advantageous associations and pleasing gifts he was successful in securing the following of large numbers of both the clergy and laity in Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor, winning the sympathy and support of Eusebius even, the bishop of Nicomedia and one of the most influential Christians of his time. For a season it seemed as if the whole Christian body had dis-crowned the Christ and had gone after Arius, so much so that when Athanasius opposed his

teachings it was said: "It is Athanasius against the world."

But by the celebrated Council of Nicæa, notwithstanding his bold exposition and able defense of his opinions, his semi-Unitarian doctrines were condemned, and under the leadership of the young deacon, Athanasius, the historic Nicene Creed was framed to exclude thereafter the intrusion of such heresies into the Church. Patches of Arianism have reappeared here and there in the earth since then, but its dogmas have not been able to recover more than a shadow of the standing they had before.

A century later came Nestorius from Germanicia, a city of Northern Syria, who exaggerated the two natures of our Lord, making of them two persons, the human person of Christ and the Divine Person of the Word. He became the patriarch of Constantinople in 428 A.D.; but on account of his unscriptural teachings he was condemned and deposed by the General Council of Ephesus in the year 431 A.D. A few years later he died in exile in Egypt, and Nestorianism declined after his death.

After Nestorius appeared Eutyches, a Byzantine ecclesiastic of the fifth century, propounding an error in the contrary direction. In opposing the doctrine of Nestorius he fell into the opposite extreme and taught that after the union of the two natures in Jesus Christ the human nature was absorbed in the divine and was no more.

For a time both he and his doctrine were warmly applauded and widely approved. But his triumph was brief, lasting no more than two years. In A.D. 451 his teachings were condemned by the Council of Chalcedon, and Eutychnianism withered away except in the Armenian, Ethiopian, and Coptic Churches in which as Monophysitism it continues in a precarious condition and perishing state.

And what shall we say more of the numerous heretics and their manifold heresies which have risen up to contest the great facts of "the Creed of Christendom" during centuries of doubt and eras of debate? Time would fail us to tell of Marcus, the licentious Gnostic of the second century, and of Marcion, another Gnostic, who, in A.D. 140, was excommunicated by his own father, bishop of Synope in Pontus; of Mani, with his Manichæism, in which he attempted to amalgamate the Magian and Christian religion with such elements of Buddhism as he knew, and create "a Christ of the Persian Road"; of the Socini of a later time, the protagonists of modern Unitarianism and the precursors of modern rationalism; and all the hierarchs of skepticism who have carried on guerrilla warfare against Scriptural Christianity from the first century to the twentieth.

There are found in them all certain characteristics which define their type and reveal their inspiration.

(1) They all go directly to the Person of Christ with their heresies.

(2) They all seek to reduce the stature of the divine Christ to the level of natural humanity or to dissolve his humanity in some speculative theory of the nature of God.

(3) They all subject the divine revelation to the dictation of the carnal reason, rejecting the Holy Scriptures in whole or in part, or deleting from them whatever is inconsistent with what they have made up their minds to believe and teach.

(4) They all in their speculative dogmas, framed subjectively and not resting on fact, tend to depart further and further in the direction of liberalism and doubt. They are unable to find a stopping place when once they depart on their wayward wanderings from the factual foundations of historic Christianity. They seek to agree with every novelty in philosophy, and thus their theology—if it may be called theology—is always in a state of flux.

(5) They all insist on retaining the Christian name after they have emptied the Christian religion of its essential nature. There is nothing stable in their teachings except the label under which they send them out and seek to commend them to unsuspecting souls.

And all these, especially the last, are the characteristics of the Modernists and Modernism of the present time.

Leading Modernists now confess without shame or equivocation that there is nothing stable or secure in their position. They openly declare that Modernism is "only a bridge from the past to the present" over which adventurous spirits are passing to "explore the country beyond."

Some of them are making a vain effort to cling to the Christ and hold to the Incarnation after accepting the dogma that the miraculous is incredible because "miracles never happen." But it is impossible to do so. Minds who rob God the Father of his liberty by binding him with the fatalistic laws of naturalism cannot long love and adore his incarnate Son whose personality involves the miracle of being at once both human and divine.

A learned clergyman of the Church of England states the matter clearly and conclusively as follows:

At the present moment Modernists are upon the horns of a dilemma, from which they can only escape by ceasing to be Modernists. In the near future a momentous option will be forced—it is even now being forced—upon them. Either they will have to take their belief in the Incarnation seriously, in which case they will have to give up their principle that miracles are incredible; or else they will have to take their principle of the incredibility of miracles seriously, in which case they will have to deny the Incarnation, and sever the last link that still binds them to Historic Christianity.¹

¹From "Creeds or No Creeds?" by Harris.

After thus speaking he goes on to give English Modernists a warning which is equally applicable to their Modernistic comrades in America. He says:

Already the Liberal Protestantism of the Continent has made its choice. *It has rejected the Incarnation.* A generation ago the movement in Germany passed through precisely the same phase that it is now passing through in England. In the late eighties, and with more insistence in the nineties, the German Liberals demanded permission to understand the clauses of the Apostles' Creed, which affirm the Virgin Birth and Resurrection of Jesus, in the "symbolic" sense advocated by English Modernists. Many of the German leaders maintained, in the same manner as their English followers, that the granting of this demand would strengthen, not weaken, the Church's hold upon the doctrine of the Incarnation. The permission was granted, and we now see the result. *To-day in the Prussian State Church Unitarianism is the dominant creed.* Can any reasonable person doubt that, the attitude toward the miraculous of German Protestantism and English Modernism being the same, the granting of this permission in England would have the same deplorable result that it has already had in Germany?²

But while this restless rationalism, with its changeful dogmas and kaleidoscopic speculations, goes on its way deeper and deeper into the darkness of doubt and despair and disintegration, in which all its historic predecessors have met defeat and death, the apostolic Creed stands firm as Gibraltar amid the seething seas which rage in-

²From "Creeds or No Creeds?" by Harris.

effectually around it. It will never pass away, for it enshrines the unchanging Christ and preserves the established facts of his Incarnate life and redeeming love.

It is by some denounced as static and decried as not being dynamic. But this is a total misconception of its nature and power. It is dynamic because it is static; for force cannot issue from fickleness. From a basis of immutable fact it releases immeasurable power to propel the progress of mankind, and upon that power the spiritual advancement of the world depends.

Rationalism is retrogressive; but the Christian Creed is progressive. During nearly two thousand years liberalism has discovered no real truth in the sphere of religion; but it has expended its energies on denying the supernatural and fructifying facts of Christianity and setting up in their stead the negations of a barren naturalism and the speculations of a sterile philosophism. It is not constructive, but destructive in all its mind and methods. It dwells among the tombs and mistakes its exhuming of ancient errors for the opening of new eras of truth.

But what practical results of good has it brought to pass by all its poor preachments of laborious negations?

It professes to be the possessor of superior culture and the promoter of advanced learning. But how many colleges and universities has it founded and fostered? It has been skillful and

too often successful, in occupying institutions of learning which orthodoxy has erected, like the cuckoo which lays its eggs in nests built by other birds. But what has it built with its own strength for itself?

It claims a more sincere and intelligent and elevated piety than that of the adherents of orthodoxy. But where are the manifestations of its heavenly sanctity and unworldly life? Where are its conquests over heathenism in pagan lands and its triumphs over irreligion and immorality in Christendom? Where are the nations it has redeemed, the parishes it has evangelized, or the souls it has led from the kingdom of darkness to "the kingdom of God's dear Son"?

It is fond of certain misleading slogans, such as "Christianity is a life and not a creed" and "Heresies of conduct are worse than heresies of belief." These are truisms, but they are without relevancy or force.

Christianity is most truly "a life"; but it is life born in revealed truth and nourished by it. Jesus affirmed that he was not only the way and the life, but "the way, the *truth*, and the life" (John 14: 6). St. Peter teaches, in accordance with the doctrine taught by his Master, that Christian life is "being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (1 Pet. 1: 23).

Does liberalism show a finer type, or greater

abundance, of Christian life than orthodoxy? Where is the list of its saints and martyrs?

“Heresies of conduct are worse than heresies of creed.” Doubtless. But both are bad. But when have heresies of creed corrected or cured heresies of conduct? Are our Modernists models of holiness? Or is this fond cry of theirs a manifestation of the Pharisaism of heterodoxy claiming superiority of sanctity as the fruit of faithlessness? Ah! No. Liberalism and life have no vital relation or connection.

The hope of the world is not in the fickle and fanciful teachings of liberalism, but in the factual Creed of the Christ and the historic Christ of the Creed; for “in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2: 9), and in him “are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2: 3). “Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4: 12.)

VII

THE CHRISTLY CREED AND THE
CHRISTLY LIFE

Whatever is best and noblest in the morality of the Gospel, flows as of necessity from the great facts of theology which the Gospel reveals.—*I. Gregory Smith, D.D., in "Bampton Lectures," on "The Characteristics of Christian Morality."*

Evil communications corrupt good manners; that is to say, false opinions have a natural tendency to produce unsatisfactory and immoral conduct.—*Marcus Dods, D.D.*

God's revelation of himself must have in view the transformation of human life into the ideal life of God as manifested in Jesus Christ, and this ideal must become the chief end of man's aspiration and endeavor. For that reason Christian ethics are related to Christian theology as the stream to the fountain, as the flower to the seed.—*From "The Culture of the Spiritual Life," by William Dickie, M.A., D.D.*

VII

THE CHRISTLY CREED AND THE CHRISTLY LIFE

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth,
and the life.” (John 14: 6.)

By the permanence of the Creed, and the unchanging Christ which it enshrines, the permanence and authority of morality are assured; for the Christian Creed is no sterile formula which is in no wise related to Christly living.

The vital connection between doctrine and conduct, creed and deed, is a characteristic mark of Christianity. In other religions, ancient and modern, it is not so.

The artistic Greek and the arrogant Roman were little affected in their lives by their creeds or their worship. From their temples and altars, having made their offerings and poured out their libations, they went forth well satisfied that they had done all that their gods could require.

In both the Christian religion and the Hebrew faith, which preceded it and prepared the way before it, the case is quite different. In both, the law is the revelation of the ethical nature of the Lawgiver, and worship of him must be in the spirit of the holiness which belongs to him.

To Israel in the wilderness the revelation of God preceded the proclamation of the Decalogue.

“Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord.”
(Deut. 6: 4 and Ex. 20: 2.)

Psalmist and seer alike declared that only he who walked uprightly and worked righteousness and spake the truth in his heart could abide in Jehovah’s tabernacle and dwell in his holy hill (Ps. 15: 1 and 2), and that the path of piety was “the way of holiness,” over which the unclean could not pass (Isa. 35: 8).

St. Paul traces the gross immoralities connected with heathen cults to pagan ignorance of God. “And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind to do those things which are not convenient [unseemly]; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.” (Rom. 1: 28–31.) Ignorance of the true God, manifested in pagan idolatries, has been always and everywhere the fecund mother of all such immoralities and iniquities.

The same evil results follow from the corruption of Christian doctrine. So St. Jude teaches that departure from the faith was the source of the grievous immoralities which he denounced. The fact that heretical teachings had

resulted in corrupt living called forth his impassioned letter in which he taught so forcibly that bad beliefs make bad behavior (Jude 1–10), and called upon the faithful to “contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.”

In like manner St. Paul taught in his first Epistle to the Corinthians that false doctrine concerning the resurrection and the future life would lead to disorderly living in the life that now is, saying, “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Cor. 15: 33)—an exhortation which a learned expositor thus paraphrases and expounds: “Beware of intercourse with those freethinkers; remember the proverb, ‘*Evil companionships corrupt honest characters.*’ This last proverb is a Greek verse from the *Thais of Menander.*” (Speaker’s Commentary.)

To suppose that there is no connection between creed and conduct is both unreasonable and unscriptural. The intellect and the will are too closely related to be without influence one upon the other. Truth accepted by the former yields righteousness in the latter.

There can be no fixed standard of morality outside the nature of God. There can be no law older than God, in which case God would not be eternal; and there can be no God older than law, in which case God would be lawless. There cannot be two eternals. Hence, when the moral law is traced to its ultimate source, it is found

to be in the nature of God the Father Almighty; or, in the words of "the judicious Hooker," "Of law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is in the bosom of God."

This is the ethical standard declared by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5: 48.)

But to apprehend that standard of perfection we must look to the Father's Incarnate and Sinless Son, in whose face only is seen "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God" (2 Cor. 4: 6). In Christ's life the "law appears, drawn out in living characters." In the Person of Jesus are disclosed his principles of right.

Hence, in the New Testament appeal to His character is always made in the declaration and enforcement of ethical principles. Duty is shown flowing from doctrine. Out of the divine mysteries of heavenly grace comes the authoritative message of earthly obligation. This is especially true of the writings of St. Paul, of whom it has been said "he preached morals doctrinally and doctrines morally."

In correcting divisive tendencies in the Church at Philippi he appealed to the eternal unselfishness of the preëxistent love of Christ and his self-sacrifice manifested in the Incarnation: "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own

things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God [*i. e.*, though he was equal with God, yet he did not account that divine state a thing to be tenaciously grasped]; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2: 3-11.)

Upon the Corinthian Church he enforced the duty of generous liberality by bringing in view the example of the Christ: "Ye know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." (2 Cor. 8: 9.)

Again, the Apostle concludes his great argument concerning the resurrection with this fervent exhortation, weighty with ethical significance: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work

of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. 15: 58.)

It is not accidental or incidental, but in logical sequence to his compelling exhortation, that after it immediate reference is made to the contribution of the Corinthians for the relief of the poor saints at Jerusalem. "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." (1 Cor. 16: 1 and 2.) Out of God's gift of good to them they were to make gracious gifts to others, and they were to do this on "the first day of the week" under the faith inspired by the day of the week which recalled to them the fact of their Lord's resurrection.

Indeed, upon all things, small and great, St. Paul brought to bear the weight of divine truth. Hence he said: "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. 10: 31.)

The loftiest unselfishness he enjoined by the force of "the powers of the world to come": "For none of us liveth unto himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." (Rom. 14: 7 and 8.)

He confessed that this unselfishness, inspired

by Christ, was the motive which impelled him to undertake and prosecute through calumny, hardships, dangers, and destitution, the amazing work of evangelization with which his apostolic life was filled: "For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." (2 Cor. 5: 13-15.) Such world-wide philanthropy as his missionary toils exhibited could not spring from any less source than the love of an Incarnate Redeemer who came into the world to seek and to save the lost.

St. Peter also rests his ethical teachings upon the basis of the divine nature: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." (1 Pet. 1: 15 and 16.)

St. John likewise calls Christians to holy and unselfish living by the atoning death of Christ: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John 3: 16 and 17.)

"The beloved disciple" specifically connects

belief in Christ and love for men in these words: "And this is his commandment, That we should *believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ*, and love one another, *as he gave us commandment.*" (1 John 3: 23.)

To the truth that belief and behavior, creed and deed, are inseparable, give all the apostles witness. "The Apostles' Creed" and apostolic ethics are of the same piece, as seamless as the robe of their crucified and risen Redeemer. They knew nothing of the holiness of heresy and the saintliness of skepticism, which pretense of piety has been called justly "the Pharisaism of rationalism." They uttered with authority heavenly doctrines and proclaimed with fidelity the unchangeable laws of righteousness found in the Decalogue, declared in the Sermon on the Mount, and revealed in the Incarnate Son of God. There was no more ethical uncertainty among them than there was doctrinal unsoundness.

But when heretical teachings appeared in the early Church ethical vagaries came with them.

Among some of the early Gnostics there was a grotesque system of hard asceticism brought forth, and among the Ebionites an enslaving Jewish legalism was maintained.

The Manichæans with their gross errors about the Christ fell into a sensual fanaticism, both polluted and polluting.

All down the centuries of Christian history

heresies in doctrine have bred moral disorders in their own image and likeness; and the saints who may be credited to liberalism there are few, if any.

Similar results are coming to pass among modern rationalists. Their unsettled faith has unsettled their ethical teachings and their changeful dogmas of doubt are beginning to bear fruit in such demoralizing systems of psychology as that of Freud.

The liberalists of former days who attacked the doctrinal truths of Christianity declared that the dissolving of Christian creeds and dogmas would in no wise affect the authority and force of the moral law. They firmly believed and constantly affirmed that the moral teachings of Jesus, as set forth in the Gospels and proclaimed by the Churches, were absolute and final.

Even such rationalists as Rousseau, Schopenhauer, John Stuart Mill, W. E. H. Lecky, and Matthew Arnold held that view, and asserted it most positively, notwithstanding the variegated doubts and shifting forms of skepticism that were entertained by them.

They inherited from orthodoxy a legacy of ethics which they vainly imagined could be held securely in connection with their dogmas of liberalism.

For example, John Stuart Mill said of Christ: "When this preëminent genius is combined with the qualities of the greatest Moral reformer and

martyr to that mission who ever existed upon the earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching upon this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor even now would it be easy even for an unbeliever to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract to the concrete than to endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life."¹

William Edward Hartpole Lecky speaks even more strongly, if possible, saying: "It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character, which through all the changes of eighteen centuries has inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love; has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions; has been not only the highest pattern of virtue but the strongest incentive to its practice; and has exercised so deep an influence that it may be truly said that the simple record of those short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists. This has indeed been the wellspring of whatever is best and purest in the Christian life."²

But with all this fair and fine talk by these leading rationalists, their efforts to undermine the authority of Christian dogma have impaired

¹ "Essays on Theism," page 255.

² "History of European Morals," pages 8 and 9.

the foundations of the morality which they praised so warmly; for the truth of the Christian Creed and the truth of Christian Ethics is one and indivisible. An attack upon one is an assault upon the other.

“The Modernist theory of knowledge is obviously antagonistic to any stable system of morality. For it is clearly impossible to declare all human knowledge relative, symbolical, provisional, and mutable without extending the principle to knowledge of the moral law. Hence complete uncertainty is introduced into ethics.”³

In the light of these principles is coming to pass that which might have been expected. The rejection of Christian doctrine is working the destruction of definite and authoritative moral principles, Modernists themselves being the judges of the fact.

A member of the educational department of a leading university in the United States has published an article, entitled, “Wanted: A Substitute for Righteousness,” in which it is assumed that all morality held in the past is now fallen into “innocuous desuetude,” and has passed away forever. The reason given for seeking to find “a substitute for righteousness” is that the standard of right and wrong which has been universally recognized heretofore rested on the acknowledgment of authority, and that “the

³ “Creeds or No Creeds?” by Charles Harris, D.D., page 350,

modern mind" rejects all authority, whether it be the authority of God, the Bible, the Church, the State, the Teacher, or the Parent. This is nothing short of the justification of anarchy in all the relations of life.

The writer of the article goes on to tell how youths in high schools and colleges come to discredit and discard all ethical standards as outworn and worthless things, stating the case bluntly thus:

Unless the boy is not particularly social, unless he is made of rather tough, unyielding fiber, he will, somehow, near the end of his high school or beginning of his college days, chuck out the right and wrong standard. I have known a few individuals who went through four years of a State university without revising in the least the standards with which they were initiated in their cradles, but these people were never influential, and, be it remarked, never much respected by their mates.

Further along in the article the writer affirms even more positively the repudiation of the moral law, saying:

We teachers know that to appeal to our students on that old standard is to waste our breath. The very words in which the appeal must be couched have gone out of their vocabulary. . . . When they appeal to you for advice, as they often do, for they are no less perplexed by the problems facing them than other young people have been, you must take care not to put the advice on the grounds of abstract right and wrong.

In the face of all this, would it not be the sensible part to recognize frankly that the standard of abstract right and wrong, with its ideal of right-

eousness, is moribund? If we should stop trying to resuscitate it, give it a decent burial, and then set to work to put something in its place, we might perhaps render some service to these jazzy, outspoken youngsters.

Another writer of the rationalistic type has discussed recently what he is pleased to call "Our Dissolving Ethics." He too avers that the standards of right and wrong are obsolete, and that educated youths no longer respect such standards. Among other things he says:

That there may be need for a reevaluation of our ethics is obvious to them (the younger generation). Why should it be so to them and not so to many of their elders? For one thing, these youngsters have been fed on a different intellectual fare from that on which their parents were fed. . . . If he turns to philosophy, he comes in contact with a world, not of fixed ideas, of eternal verities, but a world where all is in a state of flux. It is not that certain eternal truths are being attacked in order to substitute others in their place, but that the lasting validity of truths, any truths, is itself under fire. His entire education has taught him to take a scientific view of life and to reject mere authority. It is not enough for a parent to point out that something is right or wrong. The youth asks "Why?" . . . With the education which we give to youth I do not see how we could expect any other result.

Then he adds this most significant and truthful observation:

We of the older generation have played with ideas, and let loose forces the power of which we little dreamed of.

Even so. Liberalistic dogmas have been propa-

gated in many institutions of learning—educators playing with modernistic “ideas”—until revolutionary “forces” have been “let loose” that threaten the very foundations of society.

Another, who is both a liberalistic preacher and a rationalistic teacher, is following his Modernistic tenets to their ethical end.

In a recent article he virtually repudiates all moral standards, delivering himself on this wise:

One problem concerns all of us to-day—the breakdown of our traditional standards. We may hold various opinions as to whether this present generation is in fact any worse than its predecessors, but one thing is clear: its attitude toward authoritative standards of right and wrong is very different from that of previous generations.

The gist of the difference lies in the fact that once the words “right” and “wrong” had a fairly well recognized content. Every one knew what was right and what was wrong. The words stood for certain types of behavior that even down to details the community as a whole recognized. But now our young people in particular are asking: What is right, and what is wrong? who is going to decide? what authorities can determine for us what is good and what is evil?

Naturally, the first way of handling the problem that occurs to many people is stoutly to endeavor to reestablish the old recognized code. . . . The fact is (however) that the newer generation simply does not understand a code. They disallow the binding authority of external standards. And the futility of talking to them in terms of code is evident enough when you take the measure of Protestantism’s most lamentable failure—it has largely lost its grip as a moral code upon the conscience of the youths.

The youth says: "I have no desire to be a saint and live what the older generation called a righteous life." All right! I will not ask you to be a saint and live a righteous life. But I will ask you to be an artist and live a beautiful life. Can you so easily escape that appeal? To have a high opinion of yourself, so high that you would hate to live an ugly life, to have good taste about your living, to know instinctively the difference between what is fine and what is false, as a skilled bank teller can discern true money from counterfeit (is true money always beautiful and counterfeit money always ugly?) by the very touch—that is not appealing to a code.

The creedless preacher now most logically becomes a codeless moralist; substitutes John Ruskin for Jesus Christ as an ethical authority; proclaims "the holiness of beauty" as superior to "the beauty of holiness"; and propounds the gospel of "good taste" for the holy faith which apostles taught was "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1: 16). He neglects to say, however, by what standard "good taste" is to be determined and why that standard is more easy of apprehension than that of morality. He gives us no test for what is beautiful and what is ugly.

These typical Modernists in America do not differ from their comrades in arms who in other lands war against the Creed and assail stable morality.

Prof. Percy Gardner of England declares that there is now less agreement concerning Christian ethics than about Christian doctrine, and

affirms flatly that "there is little agreement even as to first principles."

Nietzsche enthroned might above right, and with his "hero-morality" sought to displace the teachings of Jesus, whom he derided.

Basing morality on a rationalistic psychology, thus shifting the center of gravity of ethics from objective truth to subjective opinion, must lead inevitably to such shadowy and shifting theories as have been under consideration. By no sort of psycho-analysis of what men *are* can be discovered the ethical requirements for what they *ought to be*. By such speculative processes the objective and eternal Moral Law is displaced and in its room is set up nothing more substantial and authoritative than the fleeting sentiments and changeful beliefs of unregenerate humanity.

Morality resting upon such a quicksand is bound to be a mere matter of prevailing taste, current vogue, pleasing convenience, or supposed utility, varying with the mutable temper of the times, the peculiarities of races, and the idiosyncrasies of individuals. It has no binding authority, and hence can make no authoritative appeal to conscience.

The corrosive compound of rationalistic religion and psychological ethics corrupts society and menaces civilization as far as it is spread. It is destructive of the very foundations of moral order and spiritual life wherever it is accepted and applied.

Liberalism is incapable of producing saintliness and is really unable to admire saints. By its dogmas of doubt it does to death spiritual life.

There must be a return to the Christ of the Creed if there is to remain in the earth the Christly life. He is the final authority in both the realm of doctrine and that of ethics.

Rebellious souls, including the callow youths who seek to make what they call "the revolt of youth," may reject His authority; but they cannot escape it. In the end, whether they will or not, they will have to submit to it, when "in his times he shall show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6: 15).

From him, who is the author of moral life, the moral law issues; and his decrees cannot be nullified by a plebiscite of modernistic psychologists. He claimed of old, and does still assert, his right and power to determine by his teachings the spiritual life and final destiny of all souls.

In closing the Sermon on the Mount—the Magna Charta of the kingdom of heaven—he said: "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man,

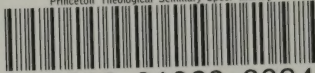
which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." (Matt. 7: 24-27.)

Surely "never man spake like this man" (John 7: 46).

It is no wonder that his wondrous words amazed his hearers as much as did his miraculous works. They were justly "astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them *as one having authority*" (Matt. 7: 28 and 29).

From the facts of his divine Person, embedded immovably in the Christly Creed, spring the faith out of which comes all Christly living, and the moral truths which are the bed-rock principles of all Christly character; for in him is life, and the life is the light of men. (John 1: 4.)

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